SUN LODGE, No. 106
EXMOUTH

A

HISTORY

OF THE

LODGE

Revised June 6, 2009

By

W. Bro. R.B.Varker

THE HISTORY OF SUN LODGE No. 106

By W.Bro. W.G.N. Gorfin, M.B.E., P.P.G.W – First edition March 9, 1959
Revised by W.Bro. R.B.Varker – Second edition June 6, 2009

Read at the Regular Stated Lodge held on Saturday, June 6, 2009, when the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Grant of the Original Warrant of the Lodge (March 17, 1759) was celebrated.

W.Bro. R.B.Varker, W.M., in the Chair

Brethren, we have assembled this evening to celebrate an occasion which should be one of pride, of joy and rejoicing, and of gratitude to the Great Architect of the Universe, who has in His mercy preserved this grand old Lodge, through two hundred and fifty years, spread over four Centuries (18th – 21st Centuries), of varying fortunes and brought it to a position where, in spite of somewhat difficult times, when many social organisations are falling by the wayside, it is still able to discharge the functions appertaining to our Order, as expressed in its motto of "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth."

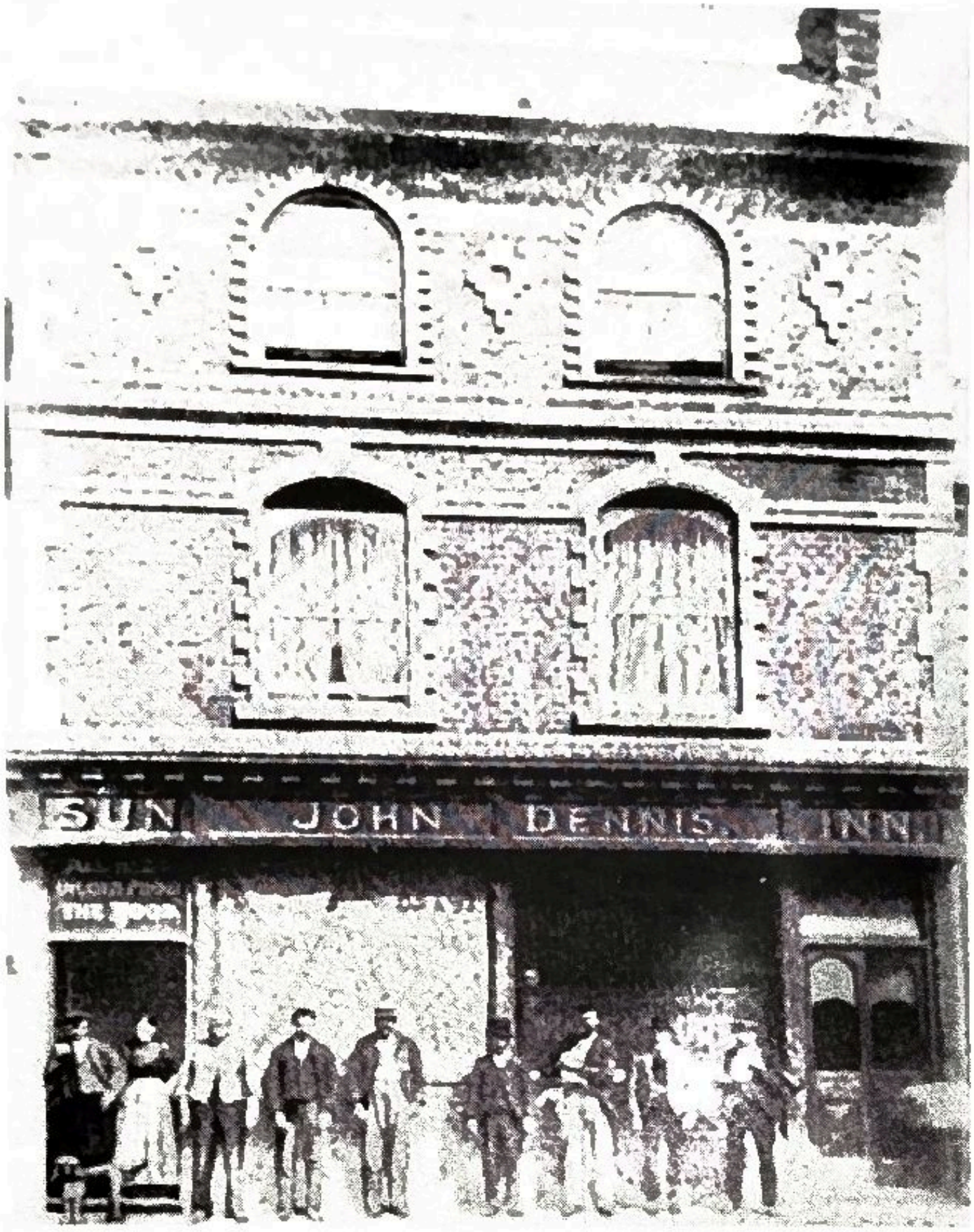
CONSECRATION, 1759

The history of Sun Lodge in its earlier days was somewhat chequered, as may perhaps be realised from the fact that though the Lodge was consecrated on March 17, 1759, a Centenary Warrant and Jewel was not granted until January, 1904.

The Lodge like some others in the country, works under a Warrant of Confirmation, which states that Sun Lodge was removed to the Dolphin Inn, Exmouth on January 18, 1784. In spite of this plain statement in the Warrant of Confirmation, which was granted on June 17, 1822, there appears to have been some doubt in the minds of Provincial Grand Lodge and Grand Lodge. They held that the removal to Exmouth took place in 1804.

So it is that we have the curious situation that a little under twelve years ago the brethren of Sun Lodge celebrated its Bi-Centenary, or two hundred years of continuous working, while this evening we celebrate two hundred and fifty years of the consecration of the Lodge.

Sun Lodge was consecrated, as I have said, on March 17, 1759 at the Sun Inn, Wolborough Street, Newton Abbot. No doubt its name was taken from the inn.



The first home of Sun Lodge – The Sun Tavern, Woolborough Street, Newton Abbot

THE GREAT SCHISM

The Lodge came to birth at a difficult time, some seven to ten years after the Great Schism in Freemasonry. At this period, Freemasonry was rent in twain and two Grand Lodges existed in England. This condition undoubtedly had a bearing on the history of the Lge.

Between 1747 and 1752 a serious divergence of opinion arose between Grand Lodge and the York Lodges, which were among the most ancient in the country. The discontented Masons first called themselves York Masons and subsequently Ancient Masons, claiming that the measures adopted by Grand Lodge seemed to authorise an omission of and variation in the ancient customs.

Probably their attitude was due in the first place to the lack of interest displayed by the Grand Master (Lord Byron) and secondly to the summary erasure of Lodges for non-attendance at Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge and for non-payment of charity dues. Whatever the exact cause may have been the seeders declared their independence and styled themselves Ancient Masons, claiming that the ancient tenets and practices of Masonry were preserved by them.

By 1752 the schism had taken definite shape and the Ancients made such headway that by 1771, when the Duke of Atholl became their Grand Master, they had 167 Lodges on their Roll. The schematics then became known as the Atholl or Ancient Freemasons and dubbed the original body with the name of the Modern Masons. These respective names were recognised by both parties up to 1813, the period of reunion.

Sun Lodge was ranged under the banner of the Grand Lodge of Modern Masons or in effect the Grand Lodge of England.

PERIOD OF STRIFE

The rival bodies naturally worked against each other in most cases, for the schism had come about as the result of very painful experiences. There did not however, appear to be a great divergence in the workings of the Ancients and Moderns and there were a certain number of instances of common action.

The Royal Gloucester Lodge 130, Southampton, for instance was warranted by both bodies and met sometimes as Ancient and sometimes

as Modern. There were frequent instances of both societies walking together in procession. Perhaps the most striking instance of united action is afforded by the Masonic address signed by the Grand Masters of both parties and presented to Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of Kent, on January 9, 1794, on his departure for Canada, wherein the hope expressed that "under the conciliating influence of your Royal Highness, the Fraternity in general of Freemasons in His Majesty's dominions will soon be united".

THE REUNION

By this time the rank and file of both organisations were becoming heartily tired of the schism. The question of union was raised on several occasions, only to be rebuffed on both sides by what may be termed the "permanent officials" who feared to lose their posts and perquisites if amalgamation took place.

However in 1810 committees were appointed by both fraternities to enquire into the possibility of fusion. The enquiry resulted in the reconciliation of the two parties on December 27, 1813, at which ceremony the Duke of Kent (Grand Master of the Ancients) installed the Duke of Sussex (Grand Master of the Moderns) as Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Ancient Freemasons of England. Nine past masters from each body were appointed to form a Lodge of Reconciliation. Thus terminated a most regrettable controversy, which had lasted for nearly sixty years.

IRREGULAR WORKING

During that period there had been a great deal of irregular working in the Lodges. Masons were being made without regard to character, position or religion. In many cases, particularly among "Ancients" it appears that the initiation fee consisted of a leg of mutton, which was cooked and consumed at the subsequent banquet.

There was a great deal of movement among the Lodges. St John Lodge No. 70, works under a Renewal Warrant. The date of its original warrant is unknown, but it apparently had a warrant dated March 21, 1759. The date of the Renewal Warrant is November 11, 1771 but the date of its Centenary Jewel Warrant is March 24, 1863.

St John Lodge was an Ancient or Atholl Lodge, constituted in the City of Exeter but on October 16, 1828 it was removed to East Stonehouse for the convenience of its members.

Just about the same time the Lodge of Perseverance, also an Atholl Lodge, moved out of Plymouth in the opposite direction. The Lodge was consecrated on June 30, 1813, at the Golden Marine Inn, Stonehouse and in 1824 it came to Exmouth and worked at the York Hotel until 1829, when it went to Sidmouth, apparently much to the relief of the members of Sun Lodge.

There was a tradition that Perseverance Lodge worked the initiation fee of a leg of mutton and caper sauce and this proved so strong an attraction that Sun Lodge felt the need for counter-measures. It was decided that two grogs (costing about 4d) should be given to each member of Sun Lodge present at ceremonies of initiation. This custom actually went on into the 20th Century, when it was abruptly ended by a new Treasurer, W. Bro. W.L. Cocks, who refused to pay the bill for the grogs when it was first presented to him.

THE BREAK

Sun Lodge at its inception was given the Number 240. It continued to pay contributions to Grand Lodge up to 1781, at which time its payments ceased.

Of the history of the Lodge between 1759 and 1781 we have unfortunately no records but one may judge from the records of other Modern Lodges extant at the time that our early brethren had a high appreciation of the principles of the Institution and that the Lodge was managed with decorum.

The regulation of debates in some of the old Lodges was drastic. A brother swearing in open Lodge was fined a shilling, which was quite a substantial sum in those days.

The Festive Board was regulated with great regard to sobriety, only sixpence being allowed to be spent on beer. This of course would allow for at least three pints. The Installation banquet cost 1s.6d to 3s.6d inclusive.

CHANGE OF NUMBERS

By the alteration of numbers in the year 1770 Sun Lodge became No 196. The numbers were closed up again in 1780 and Sun Lodge became No.160. There was a move in the other direction in the following year and Sun Lodge then became No.161 and also faded from the records of Provincial Grand Lodge.

There are a number of references to Sun Lodge in the records of the Provincial Grand Lodge during the next few years and it is obvious that its fate is wrapped in mystery.

On January 28, 1786, the Provincial Grand Master of Devonshire reports, "I have yet heard nothing from Lodges 161, Sun, Newton Abbot, 162, Angel, Crediton, 269, Plymouth Dock or 289, Exeter, Teignmouth."

January 12, 1786, "This supposed that 161 had not met for a long time."

The Provincial Grand Secretary, Devonshire reports February 2, 1801, with regard to No.141 Sun, (It will be noted that in spite of the apparent disappearance of the Lodge, it had been given the new number of 141 in the year 1792, so that it was evidently not regarded as completely redundant). The Provincial Grand Secretary reported, "Remaining members abroad and Master in Ireland. There is a request to be indulged to the next Quarterly Communication in May and no longer."

This indulgence was obviously extended, for more than two years later on March 26, 1803, the Provincial Grand Secretary reports, "The Warrant of the Lodge No.141 Sun, Newton Abbot has been for some time lost or missing, the members are all dead except one and he if not dead is in Ireland and not likely to return." It is a little curious by the way, that with Ireland in such a disturbed state, that while hundreds of Irishmen were flocking to England and joining Masonry in this country, the only Sun Lodge member was awkward enough to go to Ireland.

However, we have it on record that in 1814, as a result of the Act of Union, Sun Lodge became No. 171. There were 641 Lodges under the older Constitution, and only 359 former "Atholl" Lodges and they were allotted alternate numbers. Many Lodges however, under both sections had become extinct and the total number actually carried forward on the Union Roll was only 647, exclusive of the Grand Stewards Lodge, which headed the list but had no number.

The Lodges were closed up again in 1832, when Sun Lodge became No. 123 and again in 1863, when it received the present number of 106. From that time the Order has never looked back and it has many thousands of Lodges today as it had hundreds at the time of the Union.

Summary of Sun Lodge number changes

1759 – No. 240
1770 – No. 196
1780 – No. 160
1781 – No. 161
1792 – No. 141
1814 – No. 171
1832 – No. 123
1863 – No. 106

THE MISSING WARRANT

On December 1, 1803, the Provincial Grand Secretary, Devonshire wrote to the Grand Secretary, "I now beg leave to inform you that the Lodge No.141 Sun, Newton Abbot by the death of its members, etc., has not been acted upon for some considerable time and the Warrant has come into the hands of Mr. John Green, of that town (who was never a member of the Lodge), and he has, very improperly been attempting to sell the Warrant but finding the Provincial Grand Lodge has directed it to be delivered up to me – to have it transferred to and united to the Lodge at Starcross, which was removed to Exmouth, where the brethren had paid for the Warrant to them, as you have been informed – he now pretends that he cannot find this Warrant. He has lately been attempting to sell or remove (as a bargain) the Warrant of the Royal George Lodge No.243, which he has also got possession of and for which he also asks an exorbitant sum. I am therefore desired by the Provincial Grand Masters and officers of this Province to inform you that in the last Quarterly Communication it was directed that the Constitution of Lodge No.141 Sun at Newton Abbot, be removed to the last new Lodge at Exmouth and that the Lodge No.243 Royal George, be removed for the brethren at Bridport."

The Grand Secretary replied on December 13, 1803, that the Provincial Grand Lodge had done quite rightly in ordering the Warrants to be returned and that they are of no more value to Mr. John Green than if they were blank paper, unless the Grand Lodge acknowledges them.

Still if the Provincial Grand Secretary can get them from him and will send them up, he (Grand Secretary) will endorse them and put the seal on them but if he cannot get them he is to issue a temporary authority of Dispensation.

It was apparently not unusual for lodge Warrants to get lost in the 18th Century. Practically all Lodges were held on licensed premises and it was customary for all present to pay something "for the good of the house". There are at least two instances of Lodges selling their Constitution and their right to hold meetings in a particular tavern, an innovation which was at once condemned by Grand Lodge. This may however explain how John Green got hold of the Warrant of Sun Lodge and so caused so much trouble to those of us who have tried to unravel its early history.

IS OUR WARRANT INACCURATE?

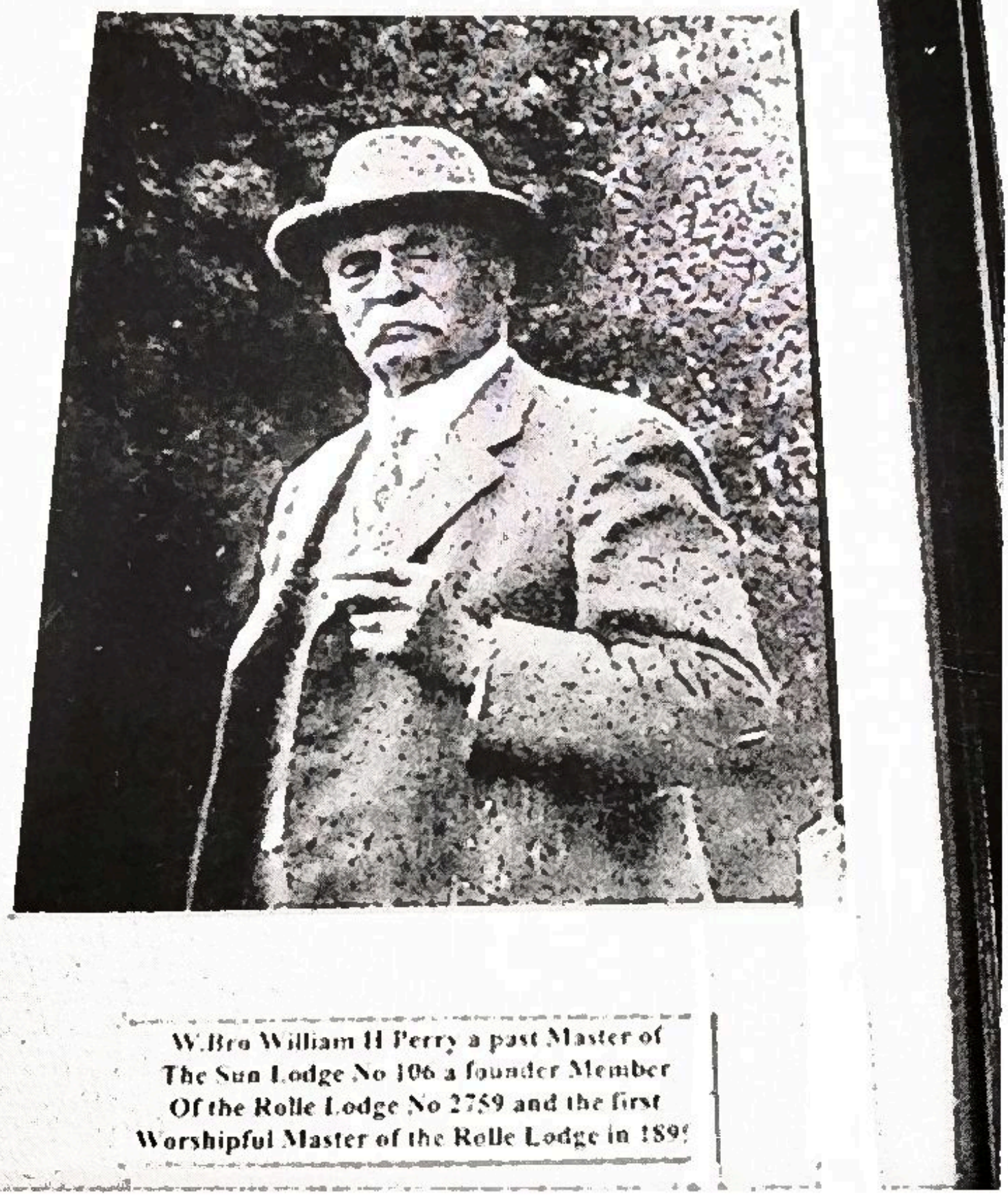
So the question arises, "Is our Warrant of Confirmation inaccurate?" Bro. John Lane a Masonic historian who flourished some hundred and ten years ago, held that it was and rather brusquely attributed the alleged inaccuracy to "ignorance or laziness", apparently on the part of Grand Lodge and its advisers. But John Lane himself might have been inaccurate. There is the evidence of the Provincial Grand Secretary in 1803, that the Lodge at Starcross was removed to Exmouth, "where the brethren had paid for the Warrant to them", so that it is fairly clear that Sun Lodge had in arrived Exmouth before 1804. How long before may be a matter of conjecture but the people who put the date of 1784 on our Warrant of Confirmation may have been at least as correct as Bro. John Lane, who condemned them as ignorant or lazy.

At all events, the Dispensation issued by the Provincial Grand Secretary, presumably in January 1804, was delivered up to Grand Lodge in the year 1822, when the present Warrant of Confirmation was granted to the Lodge.

A copy our Warrant of Constitution is held within the book of Sun Lodge No.123 bylaws and thus can be studied by every brother at his leisure. There is one interesting point about it. The first brother named in the Warrant, John Higerty was a bootmaker with a business in Manchester Street, Exmouth. His son Bro A. Higerty, was initiated into Sun Lodge on the day that W Bro. Harry Perry was installed. Bro. A. Higerty became an enthusiastic Mason in London. He was a member of the Board of General Purposes of Grand Lodge and visited his Mother Lodge on many

occasions. The portraits of the Higertys, father and son, used to hang in the Long Room but have now disappeared. I hope they have been preserved because they are of great historical interest to Sun Lodge, as is that of Bro. Nicholas Bickford, of whom more hereafter.

W.Bro William H Perry P.P.G.D.C



W.Bro William H Perry a past Master of
The Sun Lodge No 106 a founder Member
Of the Rolle Lodge No 2759 and the first
Worshipful Master of the Rolle Lodge in 189?

Warrant of the
Warrant of the Sun Lodge No 123
Exmouth.

Augustus Frederick &c

To all and every our Right Worshipful
and loving Brethren

We Prince Augustus Frederick of
Brunswick Luneburgh Duke of Sussex
Earl of Inverness Baron of Arklow, Knight
of the Most Noble Order of the Garter &c

GRAND LODGE SEAL

Grand Master

of the Most Antient and Honorable
Fraternity of Free and Accepted
Masons in England

Send Greeting

WHEREAS it appears by the records
of our Grand Lodge that a Warrant
bearing date the 17 March 1759 was
issued under the Seal of Masonry enabling certain
Brethren therein named to open and hold a Lodge
of Free Masons at the Sun Tavern in the Town
of Newton Abbot in the County of Devon and that

number 200 By the alteration of numbers on 7th it became 196 By the alteration on 1st it became 196 Now the Petition of the Right Worshipful Grand Master for the said County of Provincial Grand Master for the said County the said Lodge was on the 18th January 1781 granted the Petition does in the Town of Exmouth in the said County where it now stands By the alteration of Numbers in 1792 it became No 191 and which Lodge in consequence of the Union of the two Fraternities of Masons on the 27th December 1813 became and is now registered in the Books of the United Grand Lodge No 171 And whereas the Petitioners composing the said Lodge have by their Memorial represented to us that their said Warrant hath by some accident been lost or destroyed and they have prayed us to grant them a Warrant of Confirmation

Now know ye that we being satisfied of the reasonableness of the said request do hereby grant this our Warrant of Confirmation unto our right trusty and well beloved Brethren John Hiscott Joseph Radford, Henry Southcott, William Sheppard Richard Pinn Nathaniel Pearce, John Land and others composing the said Lodge authorising and empowering them and their Successors to assemble and hold a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons at the Dolphin Inn Exmouth aforesaid under the title or denomination of

The Sun Lodge

at such times as the Brethren thereof may appear necessary and them and there when duly congregated to make pass and raise Freemasons according to the antient customs of the Craft in all ages and nations throughout the known World And further

of the within mentioned Brethren We do
appoint the said John Rogers to be Master
& that Moses Hazelhurst & he the Senior Warden
and the said William Shepherd to be the Junior
Warden to govern and direct the said Lodge
until such time as another Master shall be
regularly elected and installed Hereby charging that
such Master who shall be elected to preside over the
said Lodge shall be installed in ancient form and
according to the Laws of the Grand Lodge that he
may thereby be fully invested with the degrees and
powers of the Office, the said Lodge to be upon the
General Register of our Grand Lodge No 171 And
We do hereby require you the said John Rogers
and your Successors to take special care that all and
every the said Brethren are to have been regularly
made Masons and that you and they and all the
other Members of the said Lodge do observe perform
and keep the said Laws Rules and Orders contained
in the Book of Constitutions and all others which may
from time to time be made by our Grand Lodge or
transmitted by us and our Successors or the over
Deputy Master for the time being
And We do enjoin you to make such
Bye Laws for the Government of your Lodge as
shall to the majority of the Members appear proper
and necessary the same not being contrary to or
inconsistent with the General Laws and Regulations
of the Craft and a Copy whereof you are to transmit
to us And we do require you to cause all such
Bye Laws and Regulations and also an account of
the proceedings in your Lodge to be entered in a
Book to be kept for that purpose And you are in
no wise to omit to send to us or to the Right

Worshipful Sir John Doyle our Deputy Grand
Master or to the Deputy Grand Master for the time
being at least once in every year a List of the Members
of your Lodge and the names and descriptions of all
Persons initiated therein and Brethren who shall
have joined the same with the Fees and Monies
payable thereon. it being our Will and intention
that this our Warrant of Confirmation shall continue
in force so long only as you shall conform to the
Laws and Regulations of our said Grand Lodge
And we the said John Deputy are
further pleased to direct as soon as conveniently may be
a Return or an Account in writing of what may
be done by virtue of these presents

Given under our **Hand** and
the **Seal** of the **Grand Lodge** at
London this 17th day of June A L
5822 A D 1822

By command of the M W
Grand Master

J Doyle D G M

William H° White
Edw. Harper } **GS**

ARISTOCRATIC DAYS

The early years of Sun Lodge in Exmouth may perhaps be described as the aristocratic period. Judging from the calibre of the brethren forming the Lodge at that time, Sun Lodge was probably carried on in exemplary style.

The ritual, learned on the floor of Grand Lodge was sacred, the past masters reigned supreme, the brethren were particular as to dress, courtesy was unfailing and great discretion was exercised as to the admission of members.

It is recorded that a good brother, a magistrate for the county, drove up to the Royal Beacon Hotel in his carriage and pair and was reported at the door of the Lodge. When asked if he was properly prepared the Inner Guard reported him to be in a grey suit of clothes. The Master courteously sent a message by his Senior Deacon, that the worthy brother must enter the Lodge in black clothes. The brother hurried to Withycombe, Exmouth, changed his clothes, returned to the Lodge and humbly expressed his regret to the Master for his inadvertence.

How interesting it would be to recover the full records of those days.

EARLY MEMBERS

One must go back a bit in time to note that the only members on the Register of Sun Lodge prior to 1806 were the Rev. Thomas Hugs of Newton Abbot, Thomas Sheppard of the 1st Battalion Devon Militia and James Couch, gent.

John Morrish, 24 years of age was initiated on December 6, 1806. Five others from Exmouth, one from Sidmouth, one from Exeter and two from Sunderland were admitted to the Lodge up to the Act of Union in 1813.

Our old Register records names down to 1796. It is believed that these were written in at a later date, probably after the Lodge moved to Exmouth, which cannot now be established.

The Minute Books of the Lodge show that the work through the years in Exmouth has been carried out on in excellent fashion.

THE GAGGING ACT

Two events which happened at the turn of the 18th Century were of great importance to Freemasons and almost certainly affected the fortunes of Sun Lodge.

The first was the Gagging Act, which was brought into force on May 12, 1799. The clause in the Bill runs, "For the more effectual suppression of Societies established for seditious and treasonable practices."

Freemasons Lodges were exempted from the operation of the Act, largely through the influence of the Duke of Atholl, Grand Master of the Ancient Freemasons, though one suspects that the presence in the Order of the Royal Dukes of Gloucester, York and Cumberland had something to do with the matter. It is a little interesting to note that Lord Moira, afterwards Marquis of Hastings, Grand Master of Scotland, claimed the credit for that privilege.

Be that as it may, the Gagging Act had the effect of preventing the formation of new Lodges for some few years but the resuscitation of Charters such as that of Sun Lodge was permitted.

It may well be that our brethren of that distant and rather dim past has tried to get a new Charter in the years prior to 1804 and finding their quest unsuccessful, proceeded to obtain power to act under the banner of the old Sun Lodge.

This is more than likely because our brethren at the time were in negotiation with other brethren at Starcross, who in 1797 had applied to the Provincial Grand Lodge for a Charter for a Lodge to be called the Union Lodge. The fee was paid for the Warrant and the Fund of Charity to one of the Provincial Grand Lodge officers but it was never handed over to the Provincial Grand Secretary and therefore the Charter was never granted. If it had been then Sun Lodge No.141 would almost certainly have gone into oblivion.

Incidentally, there is in the records of Provincial Grand Lodge a reference to the Indefatigable Lodge at Exmouth, which so far as is known, never existed. My interpretation of this is that the word Indefatigable referred to the enthusiasm and commitment of the Sun Lodge and its members and not the name of the Lodge itself. There is an Indefatigable Lodge No. 237,

meeting at Swansea, Date of Warrant – September 1800. Warrant of Confirmation May 8, 1805 – Centenary Warrant January 25, 1878.

The working of Provincial Grand Lodge and Grand Lodge in those days was certainly not as exact and meticulous as it is today.

THE BIRTH OF HARMONY

It was in the year 1823 that Sun lodge, then No. 171 took a big hand in bringing to birth the Lodge of Harmony at Budleigh Salterton. It is not too much to say that Sun Lodge is the mother of Harmony Lodge, though the new Lodge at Budleigh Salterton was actually "fathered" by St John's Lodge of Plymouth, the Atholl Lodge I have already mentioned.

Sun Lodge was then meeting at the Dolphin Inn, The Cross, Exmouth, where it had settled on arrival in Exmouth. It remained there fore four years and moved to the Globe Hotel, The Strand, Exmouth (subsequently the site of Clapp's Café), in 1808. It went back to the Dolphin Inn in 1817 and remained there until 1842, where it again reverted to the Globe Hotel. There it remained until the Globe Hotel was demolished in 1866, when it took up its quarters in the ballroom of the Royal Beacon Hotel, Exmouth. After another 28 years it obtained its present home in this Masonic Hall at St Andrews Road, Exmouth and we need be thankful to our Brethren of those days for the sacrifices which made this possible.

Harmony Lodge would appear to owe its origins to the zeal and enthusiasm of a Bro. Rippon, who was a member of St John's No. 70, Plymouth, then No. 98 and meeting in Exeter. The Craft does not seem to have been very flourishing in Exeter at the time but Bro. Rippon was evidently determined that it should not stagnate in the Province, for in 1823, when Master of his Lodge, he fathered Harmony Lodge and in the following year was instrumental in bringing Perseverance Lodge from Plymouth Docks to Exmouth. In 1828 he moved Perseverance Lodge to Sidmouth and presided at the first meeting held there and in the same year, when he again accepted the Chair of St John's Lodge, he accepted the invitation of Fidelity Lodge, No. 40 and removed St John's Lodge to Plymouth. St John's Lodge was originally a military Lodge and was one of the earliest Atholl Lodges.

Fidelity Lodge was warranted at Rotherhithe, London, in 1799 and removed to Plymouth in 1810.

The Brethren who petitioned for a Warrant to constitute the Lodge of Harmony, however were eight members of Sun Lodge who lived at Budleigh Salterton, These were Charles Perriam – cordwainer, Thomas Burch – mariner, Robert Parsons – builder, Henry French – mason, Samuel Williams – glazier, Robert Williams – builder, (Littleham), William Curry and Samuel Emmett – mariners. John Gush – builder, also appears on Grand Lodge register as a founder but he did not sign the petition.

So the Lodge of Harmony was consecrated on April 18, 1823 in the little cottage of Bro. Robert Parsons, at No.10, Queen Street, with Charles Perriam as the first Master, Robert Parsons Senior Warden and Thomas Burch Junior Warden.

In these days, when as we know by our own experience in Exmouth, warrants were difficult to obtain, even when backed by old Lodges with a long waiting list of applicants, it may appear extraordinary that Grand Lodge should have entertained the petition of nine brothers who were all more or less in humble circumstances and lived in what was then practically a fishing village, where the adult male population all told could not have numbered more than 200 persons but in considering this matter, the difference in times must be taken into account. Harmony Lodge, No. 776 was born only eight years after the Battle of Waterloo, in third year of the reign of King George IV. This is twenty one years before a railway came even as far as Exeter, thirty eight years before the railway came to Exmouth and seventy four years before it was extended to Budleigh Salterton.

The first five visitors to the Lodge of Harmony in 1823 were Brethren of Sun Lodge and the friendship thus begun was further cemented on November 13, 1833 when on the proposition of Bro. Stonelake it was unanimously agreed that the Lodges should visit each other without paying visiting fees. In effect the visiting Brethren should pay for their own refreshments.

The brotherly interest and goodwill between the two Lodges has continued to the present day and Exmouth Brethren have taken a worthy part in the life of the Lodge of Harmony. W. Bro. Webb Elphinstone-Stone was a leading figure in the life of the Lodge of Harmony some years ago. Bro. Benjamin Butter Bastin of the Royal Beacon Hotel was balloted for as a joining member in 1846 and on election appointed Senior Deacon.

Other Exmouth Brethren who have filled the Chair of the Lodge of Harmony were Bros. Robert Tucker-Pain, John Towning, Thomas Hine, George Coombes Charles W. Leyman, Harry Atkin, William Holman (whose son was also a member of Sun Lodge), John Galt and Sampson Bennett who was Junior Warden when Harmony Lodge celebrated its Centenary. The two Lodges have certainly been good neighbours and their fraternal feeling was never stronger than it is today.

THE CENTENARY

The Centenary of Sun Lodge, then No. 123 was celebrated at the Globe Hotel, Exmouth on Monday June 6, 1859, under the presidency of Bro. Nicholas Bickford, W.M. The Freemasons Magazine, London of June 1859 had this report;

"The Lodge was opened at 3 p.m., the following brethren being present: Bros. G. Turner, P.M. 123, H.C. Adams, P.M. 123, H. Bridges, Nos.983, 123 and P.M. of 1012, 680, 367 and 38, P.P.G.D. (Surrey), W. Opie, P.M. 123, P.P.G.D. (Devon), C. Titherley, P.M. 123, C.P.P. Thomas, P.M. 123, C.W. Bricknel, P.M. 123, H. Southcott, P.M. 123, J.T. Melhuish, P.M. 123, F.C. Trower, P.M. 823, G.K. Holmes, 123 and P.M. 576, B.B. Bastin, P.M. 509 (Harmony) and Secretary 123, T. Gibson 325 (Ireland), P.M. 354 and 564, T. Redway S.W. 123, R. Redway J.W. 123, P.M. Hadley, P. Collins, W.T. Maynard, W. Bicknell, J.B.H. Melhuish, J.D. Dixon, W.H.G. Churchill, H.B. Stark and many others.

It will be noted that there was a fair sprinkling of the purple of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Devon and other Provinces, as well as many well known Exmouth names, men who helped to build up the life of the town in their day.

After the Lodge had been duly opened, the Master said: Brethren, on March 17, 1759, the Grand Master of England, under the seal of Masonry, granted a Warrant enabling certain brethren to hold an assembly of Freemasons, which by the munitions of time and other circumstances is now number 123 in the books of the Grand Lodge of England.

Although the Warrant was dated March 17, 1759 it has always been understood the first meeting was held on June 6, 1759. In 1759 the original Warrant and the Minute Books and other books were destroyed or lost, it is believed by fire. The Grand Lodge subsequently granted a

Warrant of Confirmation. Unavoidable circumstances prevented the brethren from meeting on March 17 in this year, so it was agreed they should meet on this day, June 6. We have to congratulate ourselves that at the end of one hundred years, this Lodge is wealthy, prosperous and happy."

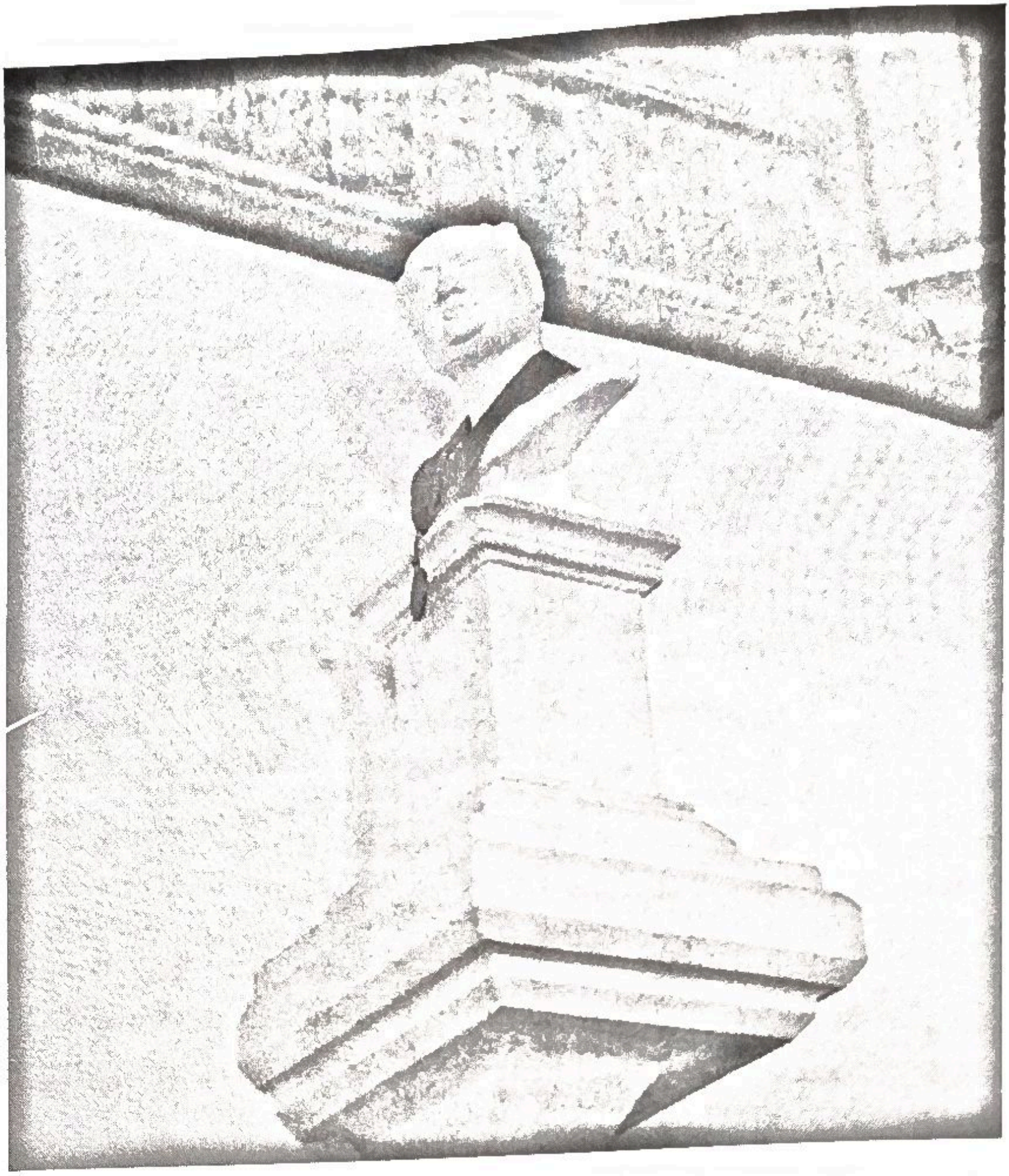
The remainder of the address was of no historic interest but today we, the inheritors of Sun Lodge can join our voices with the chorus of congratulations and gratitude that went up one hundred years ago.

I have been told by those who knew Bro. Nicholas Bickford (I am afraid I only knew his son), that he had a jolly round face and gentlemanly bearing, which gave him quite an atmosphere to the Chair of King Solomon, especially on such an auspicious occasion as the Centenary.

On this memorable occasion W. Bro. G.W. Turner, whose bust is in our Lodge Room and who was a most enthusiastic and able Mason, drew up a Centenary Ritual. The fly-leaf was inscribed; "A ritual to be used at the Centenary Meeting of Sun Lodge 123, Exmouth, on the 6th day of June 1859. Behold the eye of the Lord is on them that fear Him." The ritual which was printed at Trewman's Office, Exeter and had a blue cover, ran to 250 copies. It would be interesting if we could discover one of them.

On the next leaf the officers were named as follows; Nicholas Bickford W.M., Henry C. Adams I.P.M., Thomas Redway S.W., Richard Redway J.W., P.M. Hadley S.D., Paul Collings J.D., James Wishart P.M. and Treasurer, H.B. Stark organist, W.T. Maynard I.G., I.M. West D.C., T.M. Ward and R.C. Johnson stewards, J.B.H. Melhuish A.T.T. Committee, C. Titherley, G.W. Turner, William Opie, C.W. Bricknell and G.P. Thomas past masters.

The ceremony was then recited and it was said to have breathed the purest breath of the sentiments of our Ritual, It apparently occupied an hour.



Bust of G. W. Turner

THE SECOND CENTENARY

The Centenary of the continuous working of the Lodge was celebrated on January 18, 1904 and we have fortunately, a fairly full account of the happenings of that happy occasion.

In the meantime we had passed one of the most momentous milestones in the history of Sun Lodge, the building of the Masonic Hall in St Andrews Road, Exmouth, (then Ferry Road) on a site acquired from the Honourable Mark Rolle.

A PERMANENT HOME

Over the last two hundred and fifty years, Sun Lodge has held meetings in various locations in Devon.

1759 – The Sun Inn, Wolborough Street, Newton Abbot
1804 – The Dolphin Inn, The Cross, Exmouth
1809 – The Globe Hotel, The Strand, Exmouth
1817 – The Dolphin Inn, The Cross, Exmouth
1842 – The Globe Hotel, The Strand, Exmouth
1866 – Royal Beacon Hotel, Exmouth
1894 – Masonic Hall, St Andrews Road, Exmouth

There is also mention in the records of the brethren meeting at Starcross but this cannot be firmly established.

It had long been the desire of the brethren of Sun Lodge, then meeting at the Royal Beacon Hotel, to have a home of their own and with this object in view a Masonic Hall Company was formed. The brethren and members of their families gave generously of their substance. They brought shares in the Company and a great many of them never asked for their money back. An annual levy of 5 shillings was made upon every member of the Lodge for the benefit of the Building Fund but the Hall was not entirely freed until 1923, when a gift by the W. Bro. E.R.F. Coleberd and the surrender of a number of outstanding shares made the building the property of the Lodge.

The following are extracts from the publication entitled "Exmouth Masonic Hall – The First 100 Years" which was compiled by W. Bro.

L.W.J. Sleeman, P.P.J.G.W (Certificate of Service to Freemasonry) and printed for the Centenary celebration in 1994.

As will be gathered, all those moves were very inconvenient and no doubt frustrating, because the Lodge was in the hands of the Landlords of the various establishments and having to rely on the goodwill of the landlords for the storage of Lodge furniture etc. Not a very satisfactory arrangement and it is not surprising with a healthy membership of 101 members at the time, members began seeking some way of acquiring their own premises.

So on April 8, 1889, W.Bro. Perry J.W. gave notice of motion, that it is desirable in the interests of Sun Lodge, that we have a building of our own and to discuss means of working out the best way to achieve this.

A committee was formed and given powers to proceed, acquire land, and get plans drawn up and passed by the Local Health Board.

The Worshipful Master asked members to contribute £7 shares and a site was initially offered by Lord Rolle in Tower Street.

On June 8, 1891, the Lodge approved the Committee action and urged immediate steps to proceed, to get tenders and obtain the lease from Lord Rolle. At this stage it was proposed the building be shared by the YMCA occupying the ground floor.

July – August 1891 – A set back, by a Lodge member who had an interest in the site and raised a lot of problems. The scheme was shelved.

November 1891 – Another site was found near Manchester Street area. Two cottages were being offered for auction and in December when the auction took place they realised £770, a sum the Committee thought too much.

April 11, 1892 – Another site was offered in Clarence Road by another member of the Lodge but on inspection the Committee did not consider it suitable for a Masonic Lodge.

February 6, 1893 – Another site in Elm Grove area was offered but rejected by the Committee.

January 1894 – The Hon. Lord Rolle suggested a site in Ferry Road (now St Andrews Road) our present home. This was accepted, the land being leased from the Hon Mark Rolle on a 99 year lease, £2 for the first two years and afterwards £4 for the rest of the term.

Messrs. Karley and Ellis were asked to act as Hon. Architects and draw up plans for the suggested building.

Plans were soon prepared and final arrangements made for the laying of the foundation stone ceremony taking place on March 28, 1894. The cost of the building was £1,400 plus some £390 for furnishings.

March 12, 1894 – It was proposed that the Provincial Grand Master be asked to nominate someone to lay the Foundation Stone. The person he chose was W. Bro. Robert Tucker-Pain, the then oldest surviving Past Master of the Lodge of Harmony, who in turn asked his wife to do the honours.

March 28, 1894 – A Lodge of Emergency met at the Royal Beacon Hotel and the reason of Emergency was discussed. The members retired from the meeting in procession to the new site in Ferry Road. The Worshipful Master gave a short history of the Lodge since 1759 and then called Mrs Tucker-Pain, wife of W. Bro. Tucker-Pain to lay the foundation stone, which she declared well and truly laid, with the silver trowel provided. (W. Bro. W.G.N. Gorfin wrote – The consecration of the Lodge in the new building in the following September gives me my first Masonic memory. I was playing on Chapel Hill when I suddenly saw a glorious procession, headed by a band, emerge from the back of the Beacon and make its way to St Andrew's Road. I believe the Order got me from that moment.)

The Anthem, "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for Brethren to dwell and to gather in unity", was sung by the Brethren and members of the public who witnessed the ceremony.

W. Bro. G. Gordon Bourne delivered an ovation, the Worshipful Master conveyed the thanks of the Lodge to Mrs. Tucker-Pain and this was supported and seconded by W. Bro. Colonel Adams.

Mrs. Tucker-Pain responded and thanked the Worshipful Master for his kind expressions and had pleasure in placing a cheque for £20 on the stone. W. Bro. Tucker-Pain likewise placed a cheque for £10.

The National Anthem was sung and the Brethren reformed in possession and returned to the Lodge and the Lodge was closed in Peace, Love and Harmony at 4.30pm. Afterwards forty Brethren dined at the Royal Beacon Hotel.

Saturday September 8, 1894 – when the Brethren of the Lodge attend for a Lodge of Emergency at the Royal Beacon Hotel at 2.15pm and assembled outside and marched in full regalia, accompanied by the Exmouth Rifles Volunteers Band, for service at 3.30pm in Holy Trinity Church. Here a large number of Masons from most of the Lodges in Devon attended the service, where the sermon was preached by the Provincial Grand Chaplain, the reverend T.W. Lemon, D.D., P.P.J.W.

The preacher, after dilating upon Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, remarked that lapse of time had laid waste and destroyed many valuable monuments of antiquity, even so the Temple of Solomon, spacious and magnificent as it was. Freemasonry, however still survived. Freemasonry was a speculative science and the members of Sun Lodge had like their ancient Brethren, just completed the construction of a Masonic Temple about to be dedicated to the glory of the Great Architect of the Universe for the better accommodation of the members of that ancient Lodge founded 135 years ago. He hoped the handsome structure would ensure the better carrying out of their ancient rites and ceremonies.

After the service the Brethren re-assembled, with the band at the head of the procession, marched down Rolle Street around the Strand to the new Lodge building in Ferry Road, here in the following order the whole procession preambled the Lodge once.

Inner Guard bearing his sword
Director of Ceremonies
Junior and Senior Deacons
Secretary and Treasurer
Junior and Senior Wardens bearing their columns
The Worshipful Master
Three Past Masters carrying corn, wine and oil
The Provincial Grand Chaplain
The Provincial Grand Secretary
The Provincial Junior and Senior Wardens
The Deputy Provincial Grand Master

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master took the Chair, being supported on his right hand by the Worshipful Master of the Lodge (W. Bro. H. Mann). The Provincial Grand Wardens occupied the Wardens chairs.

The Lodge was opened in the First Degree and the Provincial Grand Secretary requested the Deputy Provincial Grand Master to dedicate the building which he did after scattering and sprinkling corn, oil and wine, after which the Provincial Grand Chaplain read the dedicating prayer – 2nd portion – and the Deputy Provincial Grand Master declared the building duly dedicated.

Later a banquet was served at the Royal Beacon Hotel, which was attended by 30 Provincial Officers, 17 officers of the Lodge, 36 Brethren of the Lodge and 31 visitors.

The style of the building is similar to how we see it today, i.e. The Temple and Ante-Room on the first floor, between floor a Committee Room (now called the Ken Alford Room). Between the war years the Festive Boards were held here after the Lodge meetings, where the Brethren would retire to partake of refreshments. These were provided by the Tyler/Steward who resided in the adjoining cottage. The food was prepared by the Steward and his wife and conveyed to the Long Room by a "dumb waiter" situated at the north-west corner of the room and downstairs at the exit door to the cottage. The dumb waiter was removed when the existing bar was constructed. These refreshments were very basic compared with our present meals that we enjoy today. They were mostly pasties, pickles, sandwiches, cheeses, etc., with tea. After suitable replies the Brethren would adjourn below to the small bar, that was sited in a small area in front of our present bar. Leading from this area were two doors at one end leading to the toilet area and the other to the Stewards accommodation.

The Ground floor approached by a tiled entrance porch and through a stained glass screen to the Hallway. On the right side (now the kitchen) was the Secretary's office and toilets. To the left side was a large Reading Room and adjoining this was Billiards Room. Both are now used as the Dining Room after improvements to merge the two rooms into a single large room in order to accommodate the large number of Brethren dining at the Festive Boards.

The Ground floor area was in many respects quite apart from the Masonic activity side of the building, this being in fact a private Gentleman's Club, known and registered as the Manor Club. The club was open all day, with

the Bar open during licensing hours and had subscribing members who were non-Masons.

Between the wars it was a popular lunchtime meeting venue for local businessmen.

The Secretary's office was designed for the purpose of administering the Club side of the building, i.e. the registering of members, administration, storage of records, both of Masonic and Club members as required by the law as a private Club.

Membership of the Club was automatic if you joined either Sun or Rolle Lodges and many members held dual membership of both Lodges (a reduced fee was charged). Non-Masons were naturally restricted to the ground floor areas.

In the 1950's, social patterns began to show marked changes and the Club side was getting less and less supported. Membership dropped and the Club side closed, other than for Lodge meetings. There had been a great decline in the private members and it became apparent most of the members were only interested in the Masonic side of the building.

During the 1950's the building went through a very difficult period. Jealousy had developed between the Lodges and much animosity and bad feeling existed, much of this stemmed from several short-sighted, strong willed Past Masters of both Lodges, who would not compromise. The issue being the property belonged to Sun Lodge, which administered, controlled and set the rents and did not wish to share any responsibility of the building.

During this time little was spent on the upkeep and maintenance of the property and the place had a very shabby atmosphere both inside and out.

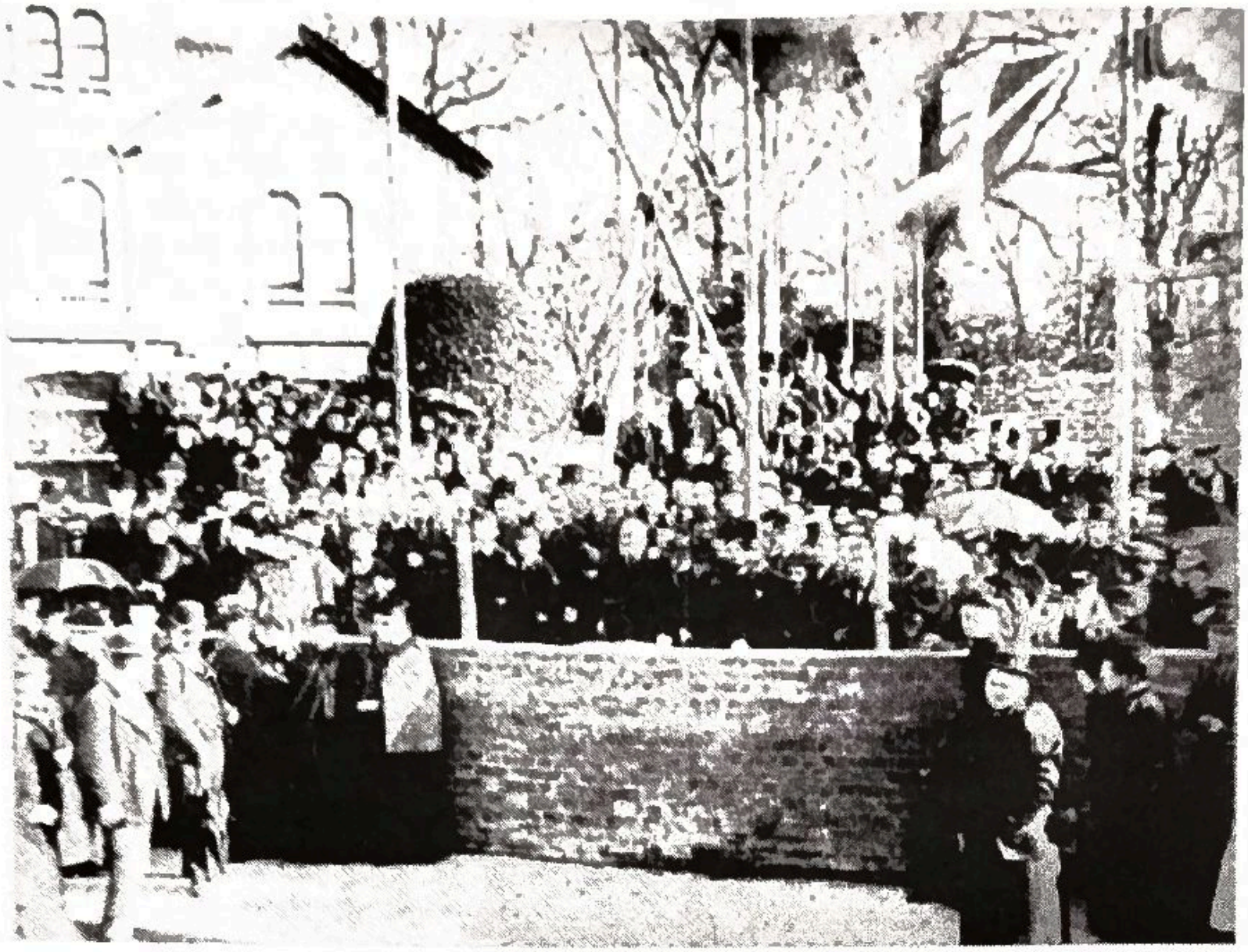
Masonry generally in Exmouth had reached an all time low, stalemate, a dilapidated building, little enthusiasm in the Lodges, with its elders at loggerheads with neither side prepared to concede. This include the Trustees of the building, who were also divided on issues. To try and resolve the matters a General Meeting was convened with all members, the Provincial Grand Master and the Provincial Grand Secretary conducting the meeting but the outcome was no progress and things continued to deteriorate into the 1960's.

However, a crack of light was appearing, chiefly from the younger members who like most members were very disillusioned and distressed to witness the depths that Masonry in Exmouth was sinking.

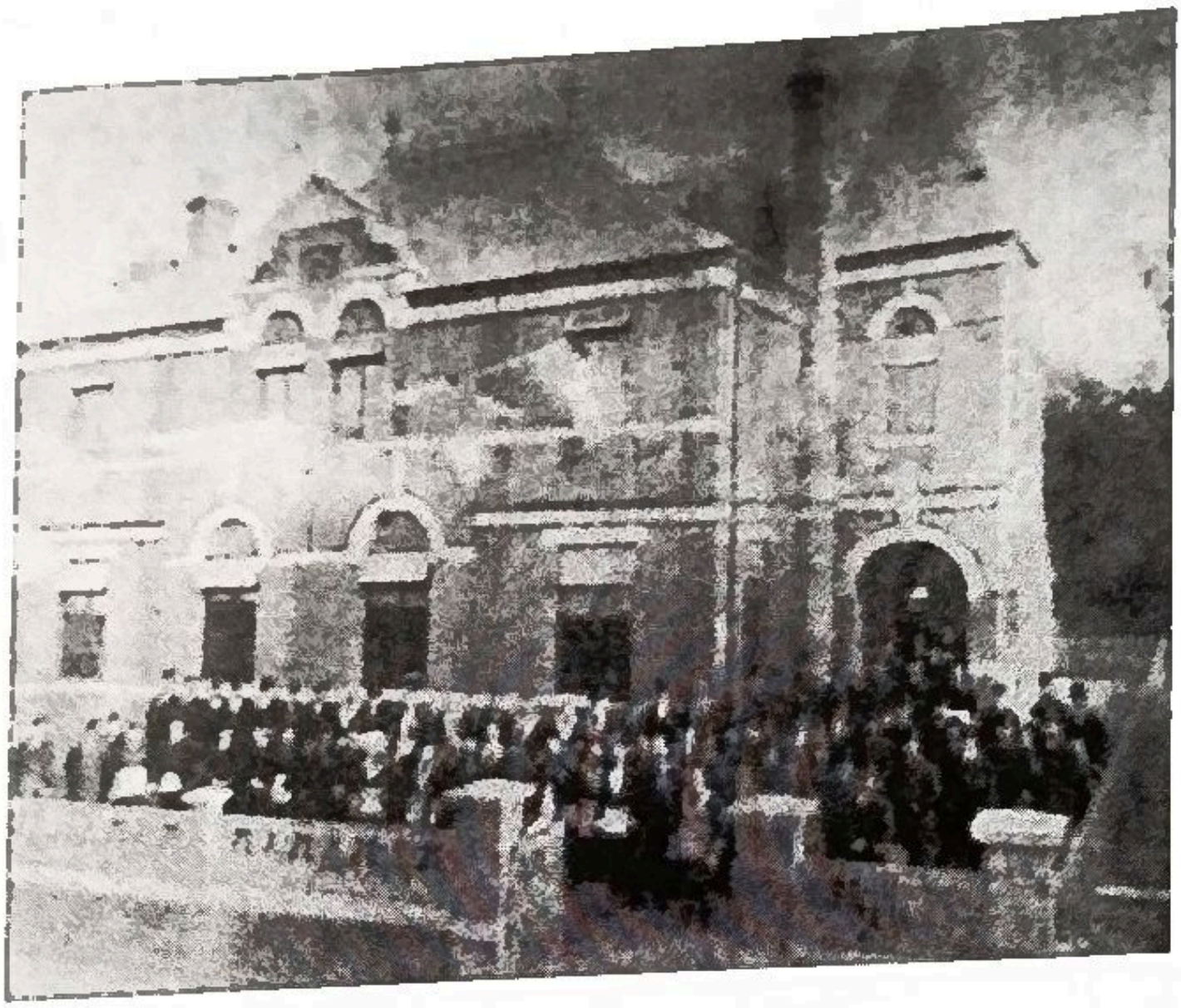
The then Masonic Club Committee which had tried to run the social side of the building and had representatives from both Lodges serving on it, put forward a suggestion to involve Rolle Lodge as a working partner and be given certain rights and responsibilities to control the building. This was received very luke warm during the first months of the idea but after some two years debating and arguing, a draft scheme was put before the two Lodges to share equal responsibility in the running and maintenance of the building and this was finally accepted by both Lodges in 1964 with Sun Lodge retaining ownership of the building vested in four Sun Lodge Trustees.

At this point it is worth reflecting on the state of our property at that time, with the exterior in a poor condition with peeling paint and rotting woodwork and the roof causing much concern. The interior paintwork was dark and dirty with peeling walls, cracked and holed linoleum on the floor. In the Temple, the lighting was poor, the carpet very worn with holes in places and the curtains torn and faded. The whole heated by a very inefficient solid fuel boiler, subject to frequent breakdowns and heavy repair bills.

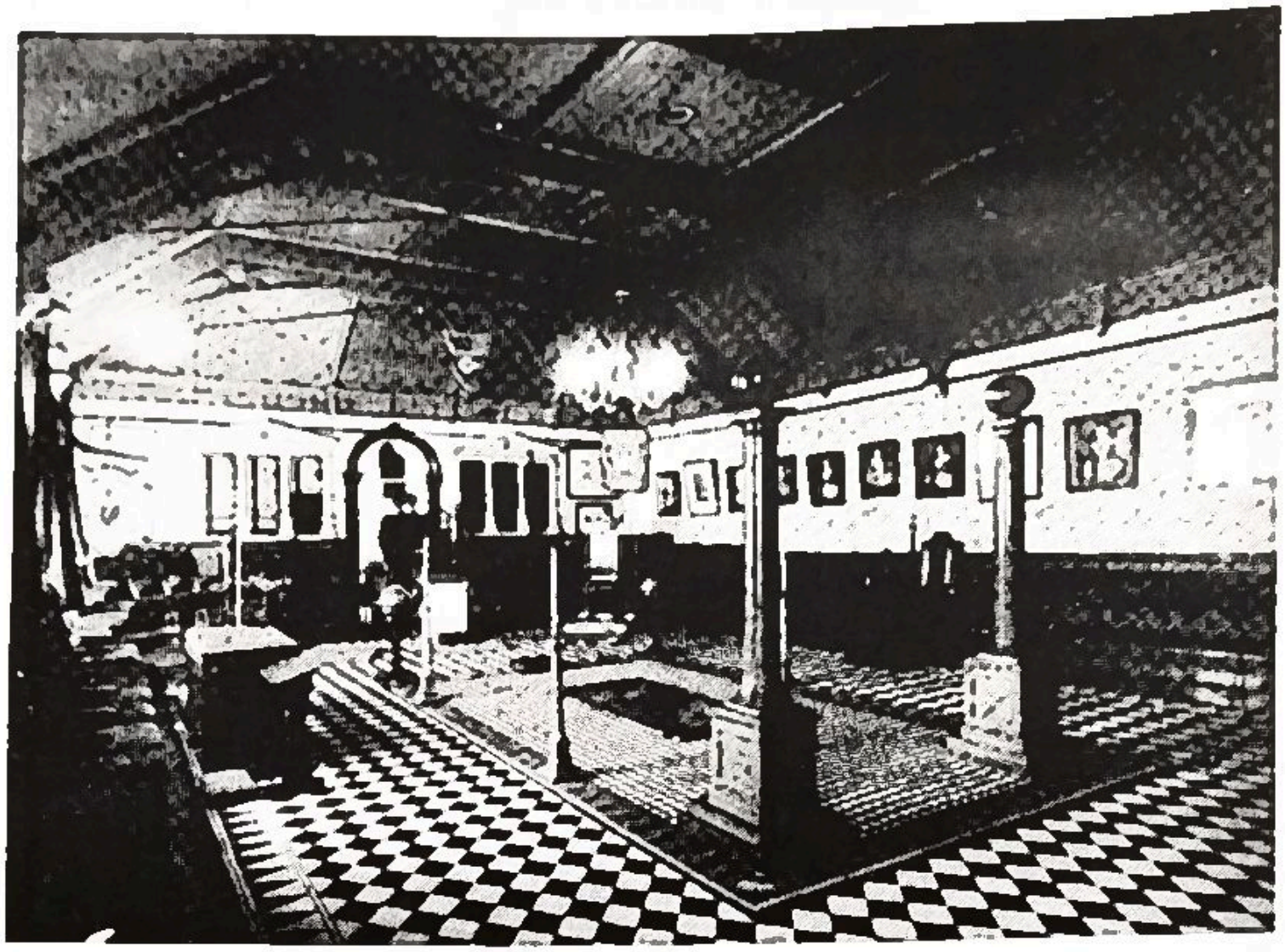
Since the formation of the Masonic Hall Committee in 1964, the roof has been repaired, the building re-wired and modern lighting installed together with a new heating heating system, new windows, new bar, new kitchen and new toilets. The reading room and billiard room have been turned into a dining area seating approximately 110 and the building has been painted and decorated inside and out and re-carpeted throughout. In addition to this, in the first years of the twenty first Century, a new robing room and toilets have been created above the kitchen and a new lift installed to assist Brethren in accessing the first floor Temple.



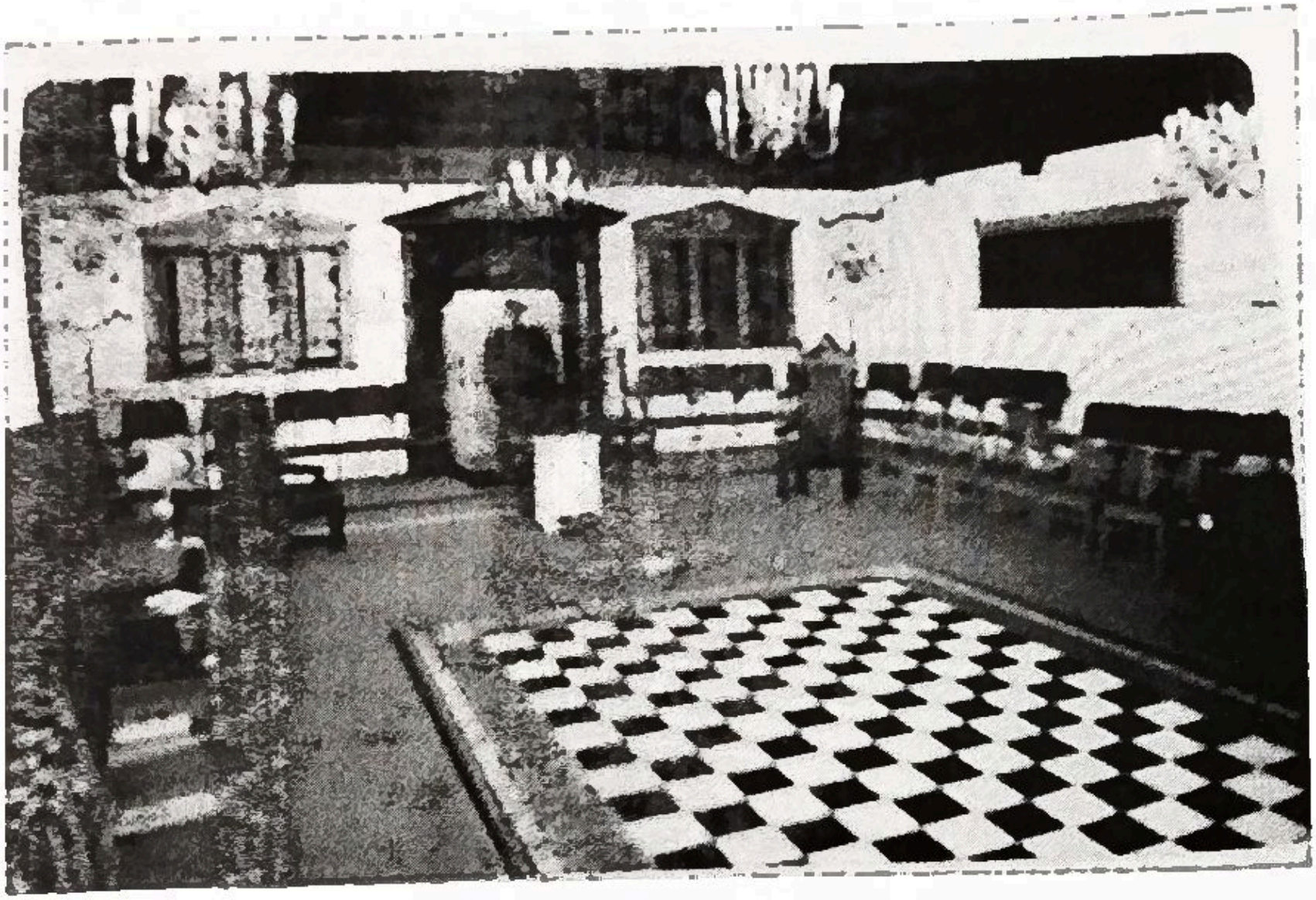
Laying of the Foundation Stone by Mrs. Tucker-Pain, 28th March, 1894



Opening Ceremony, 8th September 1894



The Temple, circa 1935



Present Temple

THE BIRTH OF ROLLE

Less than five years after Sun Lodge had settled into its new home, it was realised that the great growth in the membership of the Craft in Exmouth, called for relief measures if Brethren who wished to pass through the Chair were to have a reasonable chance of realising their ambition.

A petition for a Warrant to constitute a new Lodge went up to grand Lodge from fifteen members of Sun Lodge among them Bros. W,H, Perry, G. Ellett, R.C. Groves, J.E. Brooks, G.W. Matthew, H. Bridle, E.J. Salter, Henry Peters, H.W. Crews and the brothers E.W. and G.J. Allen.

The petition was granted and The Rolle Lodge was constituted on May 18, 1899 with permission from Exmouth's great benefactor, the late Hon. Mark Rolle, to use his arms. The Rolle Lodge celebrated its jubilee in 1949 with a service in Holy Trinity Church and a banquet at the Regal Ballroom. In 1999, Rolle Lodge celebrated its Centenary and we trust that the Rolle Lodge will continue flourish until time is no more.

MOMENTOUS LANDMARK

So we come to one of the most momentous landmarks in the history of Sun Lodge, one to which I have already referred in brief, the celebration of the Centenary of continuous working on January 18, 1904.

Curiously enough, there was no public service of thanksgiving on that occasion, which gives us a link with the present celebration.

The 1904 Centenary was celebrated at the annual Installation Festival, when W. Bro. W.H. Wright of Withycombe was installed in to the Chair of King Solomon by W. Bro. W.H. Perry, who acted as Installing Master for many years. Indeed it was not until two years later that W. Bro. Edwin Webber installed his successor. He was the first Master of Sun Lodge to perform the office for a long period but his example we are thankful to say, is being generally followed today.

The occasion attracted a record attendance of Brethren from all parts of the Province and we are informed by the current reporter that it aroused the utmost enthusiasm.

Among the Brethren present, were Bros. John Stocker then the Provincial Grand Secretary, Charles Piper, John Marks, G.W. Matthew, G. Coombes, W.H. Holman (Master of Harmony Lodge), G. Bennett, R. Tucker-Pain, J. Buck, J. Lewin, J. Galt, J. Radford, S.G. Sheppard, E.R.F. Coleberd, E.G. Balmanno, R. Jago, J.E. Poole, W. Haynes, T. Freeman, E. Bishop (Organist), P. Sherwin (Chaplain), T.W. Perry, H. Ewens, J.T. Foster, F. Hayne, H. Bridle, H.W. Crews, H. Atkin, F,W, Clapp (I.P.M), S. J. Blackmore (J.W.), E. Webber (S.W.), A. Tootell (Ass Sec), F.G. Davey (J.D.), A. Kneel (Registrar), W. Runnals (Supt Works), W.O.G. Langdon (D.C.), J. Titt, T.A. Spear (A.D.C.), S. Burrow (Charity Steward), H.D. Coles, H. Peters (S.D.), F. Pyle, E.J. Salter, T. Sedgemore (I.G.), A. Pearson, J.H.L. Way, F.C. Horn (S.S.) (father of W. Bro. F.T.E. Horn), H.J. Randall, J. Dixon, T. Tucker, H. Newberry, E.W. Allen, C. Beesley, W.J. Horne (Charity Steward), W. T. Blake (Tyler), W.L. Cocks (Tres), A. Cleak (Sec), G. Hooper (J.S.), J. Newberry (Stand Bearer), F. Grace (Sword Bearer) and W.H.G. Churchill (Almoner).

One of the interesting features of the day's proceedings was the presentation to the Lodge by Bro. Henry Peters of an organ, which was used for the first time in "the musical ritual of the proceedings, for which gift the generous donor was warmly thanked and a silver tablet ordered to be engraved to record the generous spirit of the donor.

THE CENTENARY JEWEL

The Centenary Jewel having been granted by Grand Lodge to be worn by Sun Lodge members, some dozen past masters (including the Installing Master, the Worshipful Master and the Immediate Past Master) were accordingly invested with the engraved gold decoration.

The banquet was held at the Imperial Hotel and the attendance of about 80 Brethren included the Provincial Grand Secretary and the Provincial Grand Chaplain, the Rev. G.C. Browne, a member of St John the Baptist Lodge, No. 39, with which Sun Lodge has always had a close affinity.

It may be of interest to quote the menu, seeing that the cost of the meal was then 4s.6d.

Soup:	Mock Turtle, Spring
Fish:	Boiled Turbot, Lobster sauce, fried fillets of sole, tartare sauce.
Releves:	Sirloin beef, boiled Leg of Mutton, Caper sauce, Jugged Hare with jelly, Roast Turkey, Sausages.

Game: Roast haunch of Venison and Port wine sauce, Roast Pheasants, Chips.
Sweets: Christmas Pudding, Mince Pies.
Cheese: Celery, Dessert

It is only fair to add that the game course was the gift of the Hon. Mark Rolle and continued to be made by Lord Clinton right up to the outbreak of the 1914 war. Those were the days of valiant trenchermen, when few thought of leaving the festive board on nights of installation before midnight.

THE SESQUINCENTENARY

The Provincial Grand Lodge held its meeting in Exmouth Public Hall, now the Savoy Cinema, in 1907, when W. Bro. A. Tootell was in the Chair. Perhaps the most memorable remark of the day was that made by W. Bro. Tootell, when he exclaimed: "The sun is master of the world but I, Brethren am Master of the Sun".

A second meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge and the last to be held in Exmouth, was convened in the Church Hall on Wednesday June 23, 1920. Incidentally, W. Bro. W.G.N. Gorfin was present in his occupation as a reporter on the eve of his initiation into the Craft. He recorded the following, "I remember feeling a bit nervous and being reassured by Bro. Henry Stocker, the Provincial Grand Secretary who got me out in good time after giving me all the information he thought was good for me".

Bro. Samuel G. Case was the Worshipful Master of Sun Lodge at the time and Bro. James Nicholson of Rolle Lodge. The occasion was a notable one for Rolle Lodge because their I.P.M., Bro. Mortimer Brutton Ford, who had passed through the Chair only nine months previously was invested as Junior Warden of the Province. Bros. F.G. Davey (father of Bro. F.W. Davey - a previous Sun Lodge Treasurer) and Thomas F. Parker (father of Bro. Jack Parker of the Lodge of Harmony) were invested as A.D.C's.

The succeeding years were noteworthy only for the clearance of the debt on the Masonic Hall Building Fund in 1923 and the formation of the Amity Lodge of Mark Masons in 1928.

There was however one little act of misguided zeal which cast a tiny cloud on the Masonic scene in 1920. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on his way to visit Lord and Lady Clinton at Bicton, had graciously consented to pay a

visit to Exmouth on Whit Monday, June 1, when I suppose, there were more people in this town than there has ever been before or since.

One or two of our leading Brethren decided to try to improve the occasion and made an approach to His Royal Highness, then Grand Master of our Order, with a view to inducing him to honour Exmouth Freemasons with an official visit. Were there faces red, after John Stocker had said his little piece? The brother who had taken the lead had a great sense of importance if not a very deep or extensive knowledge of Freemasonry and there were quite a lot of wicked people who enjoyed the situation immensely, although every effort was made to cover it up. I am sure that today we know better than to offend in such a way but I am also sure that if our late brother had succeeded in his misguided quest he would have been a hero in the eyes of his detractors and even in our eyes. After all it is of such stuff that heroes are made of.

In 1934, when W. Bro. W.G.N. Gorfin was given the great honour of presiding over our grand old Lodge, he was given the added privilege as Master of one of the eight oldest Lodges in the Province, to escort H.R.H. the Prince of Wales when, as Grand Master, he visited the Convocation of the Provincial Grand Lodge in that lovely old Plymouth Guildhall, which was destroyed by Nazi bombs only seven years later.

Sun Lodge was associated in that honour with five Lodges, which had touched its history in the early days – St John's the Baptist, No. 39, Exeter, St John's, No. 70, Plymouth, Fortitude, No. 105, Plymouth, St George, No. 112, Exeter and Perseverance, No. 164, Sidmouth.

I recall that all eight of us Masters felt extremely honoured but when the Grand Master shook hands with us and I took a look into his amazing light blue eyes, I had just a suspicion that the feeling was not quite shared. He had had a tremendously busy day, besieged by cheering crowds for hours and his eyes said more clearly than any words, "For heavens sake, let's get this over, so that I can sit down and have a bit of peace!"

No doubt you and I Brethren are sharing this feeling at the present moment but I refuse to take the blame. The General Purposes Committee gave the order, probably not realising what they were letting you in for and I had but to obey.

The celebration of the Sesquicentenary of the Lodge, marked the completion of 150 years of the continuous working of the Lodge in Exmouth and it attracted the biggest assembly of members of the Craft ever to gather in the Lodge Room.

The Lodge was honoured by the presence of the Provincial Grand Master (Bishop W.F. Surtees), the Provincial Assistant Grand Master (Sir Arthur C, Reed) and many Provincial Grand Lodge offices, in addition to twelve Masters of Lodges, among them the Master of Sun Lodge, No. 6040, London, which was formed in 1945, previous to which our Lodge has been the only Sun Lodge in Masonic firmament for 186years.

During the evening the minutes of the Centenary celebration were read and an outline given of the history of the Lodge.

On the previous day, Sunday September 7, 1954, a service of thanksgiving attended by the Provincial Grand Master was conducted in Christ Church, North Street by the Rev. W.C> Watkins, then a member of Sun Lodge and the following year invested as its Chaplain.

The Rev. W. Rodgers, Past Assistant Grand Chaplain, in his sermon spoke of that Nameless Presence which filled King Solomon's Temple and inspired its builders, that Presence which has been with you in your work for Freemasonry in Exmouth for 150 years and will be with you till time with me and you shall be no more. That Presence, he continued, hovers over us today more especially in the tremendous difficulties that face and confuse us all in this new world, with men talking about a new order. We need no new order, what we want is faithfulness to that which has been already established.

Special prayers for the Masonic Order were said, with thanksgivings for the blessings enjoyed by Sun Lodge during the previous 150 years. The first lesson (2 Chron vii. 11-22) was read by Bro. W.G.N. Gorfin P.P.G.D., D.C., and the second lesson (St Matthew v, 1-16) by Bro. The Rev. W.C. Watkins.

An offertory was taken for the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution.

THE BI-CENTENARY

Sun Lodge celebrated two hundred years of continuous working on April 8, 1997, with W. Bro, Norman Forte in the Chair.

The Lodge was very honoured with the presence of Lord Farnham the Pro Grand Master who represented Grand Lodge on the evening and added to the special significance of two hundred years of continuous working.

BI-CENTENARY WARRANT

Below is a copy of the Bi-Centenary Warrant issued to Sun Lodge on March 2, 1997.

To the Worshipful Master, Wardens, other Officers and Members of the Sun Lodge No 106 and all others whom it may concern.

GREETINGS

Whereas it appears by the records of the Grand Lodge that on the 2nd day of March 1797 the Provincial Grand Master of Devonshire issued a Warrant for the Formation of a new lodge to be opened at the Globe Tavern, Starcross, Devonshire, which lodge was named The Union Lodge and whereas in the year 1800 by permission of the Provincial Grand Master the said lodge removed from Starcross to Exmouth and whereas the Brethren of the said lodge petitioned the Premier Grand Lodge for a Warrant and from the 18th day of January 1804 were permitted to meet by the Authority of the Warrant of Constitution of and under the name and number of the Sun Lodge No 141 which had ceased to meet and whereas in consequence of the union of the said Grand Lodge with the Atholl Grand Lodge on the 27th day of December 1813 the said Lodge became No 171 on the Register of the United Grand Lodge of England. And whereas on the 17th day of June 1822 a Warrant of Confirmation was granted to the said Lodge in exchange for the Warrant transferred to it in 1804. And whereas in consequence of the subsequent alteration made in the numbers of the Lodge in the years 1832 and 1863 the said Lodge became and now stands on the Register as No 106 meeting at the Masonic Hall, St Andrews Road, Exmouth in the province of Devonshire under the Title or Denomination of the SUN LODGE And whereas satisfactory proof has been produced of the uninterrupted existence of the said Lodge for two hundred years dating from the 2nd day of March 1797 and whereas the Brethren composing the said Lodge desire to be

permitted to wear a Commemorative Bar on the Ribbon of the Centenary Jewel authorised by a Warrant dated the 18th day of January 1904 and have prayed our sanction for that purpose.

NOW KNOW YE that we have taken the petition into consideration, have agreed to their request and in virtue of our prerogative DO HEREBY GIVE AND GRANT to all and each of the subscribing members of The Sun Lodge being Master Masons permission to wear a Bi-Centenary Bar on the ribbon of the Centenary Jewel as illustrated herein.

Given at London this 2nd day of March
AL5997 AD 1997.

By command of the Most Worshipful Grand Master his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent K.G. etc etc etc etc.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OF HISTORIC VALUE

Members of Sun Lodge appear to be rather good at celebrating important anniversaries but that is probably a first impression that is more apparent than real. It is created by the fact that we have so many anniversaries to celebrate and that we do observe some of them. If we had celebrated the lot, our celebrations would have been almost commonplace as were Lodges of Emergency in the life of the Lodge in the middle of the nineteenth century.

THE NEW NUMBER

On Monday, August 12, 1963, Sun Lodge celebrated the re-enumeration of the Lodge from 123 to 106, an event which was announced at the regular meeting on Monday August 10, 1863 at the Globe Hotel, Exmouth, by Bro. Secretary Bastin, who gave notice that a communication had been received from the Grand Lodge allotting the number of the Sun Lodge to 106 and intimated to the Brethren that in future all correspondence relating to the Lodge must bear that number.

Bro. Secretary Bastin was actually W. Bro. Benjamin Butter Bastin, a great figure in the Lodge and the licensee of the Globe Hotel, Exmouth. His son of the same name was that evening acting as Senior Warden pro tem, and the Deacons, Bro. J.W. Gibbings and George J. Bishop were also acting pro tem. No business was done with the exception of reading the minutes of the Lodge held on the June 8 and the Lodge of Emergency held on the July 6, with the notice of the Lodge on July 13, 1863.

There had been one or two interesting events during the year 1863. In March, John Spettigue who lived in the Manor House, in what is now the Manor Gardens, was balloted for and initiated, at the mature age of 61. HE was Master three years later. The Brethren also granted the Tyler, John Bowey, P.M. the sum of ten shillings a week from the funds of the Lodge until the annual election on May 15 of annuitants to the Royal Masonic Benevolent Fund because of his distressed condition caused by his being incapacitated from work through illness and in recent bereavement of the loss of his wife, who for a considerable period had materially contributed to their support by keeping an infant school. Bro. Bowey got the R.M.B.I. annuity in May.

Bro. Francis Horn, described as a letter carrier (he was the grandfather of W. Bro. Ted Horn) had been initiated earlier in the year.

EMERGENCIES

John Spettigue had been initiated at a Lodge of Emergency on Saturday, March 7, called by the W.M. W. Bro. W.T. Maynard at the request of Bros. Bickford and Adams for the purposes of relieving the regular stated Lodge of a portion of its duties. The regular stated Lodge was held two days later but in consequence of the small attendance of the Brethren (there were only nine) the W.M. appointed a Lodge to be held on Monday, March 16instead for the purpose of transacting the ordinary business of the Lodge and the initiation of a candidate. The Lodge was duly held and was in considerable labour. Bro. Charles Titherley, P.M. of Harmony Lodge, No. 509, Budleigh Salterton, was elected a joining member, Bro J.W. Gibbings, who acted as Senior Deacon pro tem only five months later, was raised, Bro. Francis Horn was passed and Mr. Alexander Blucher Webber, the proprietor of the drapers shop in ST Andrews Road and the builder of St Bernard's (the Town Hall) was balloted for and initiated, as was Mr. John Ward of Exmouth. It was certainly not unusual to have more than one ceremony in an evening and even on this occasion the Lodge was closed at 8.30p.m.

Lodges however, were certainly held at irregular intervals. A Lodge of Emergency was held on Thursday, April 9 at the request of Past Masters Wishart and Bickford, the emergency being that Bros. Dyer and Hayman, being now at port, were desirous of being raised and passed before commencing another voyage to sea. It was then reported that as the Provincial Grand Chapter would be held at the Globe Hotel on the following Monday, the regular stated Lodge would be held on Saturday, April 18 and on this notable occasion, five members were passed and good deal of other business was transacted. More labour continued to be done at emerge3ncy meetings than at the regular stated Lodges. At a Lodge of Emergency on Monday, July 6, Bro. Nicholas Bickford presided pro tem, Bro. Henry Bishop Starke was called up from organist to Senior Warden and John Spettigue, raised only in May, acted as Junior Deacon. Then a regular stated Lodge should have been held on July 13 but insufficient members did not attend to complete the working and in consequence thereof and no business being before the Brethren, it was agreed that the Worshipful Master should call the next Lodge on the regular day of the ensuring month, namely the 10th day of August.

So we come to the momentous meeting of that date, when news of the re-enumeration was communicated to only eleven Brethren. The following

month there were 48, including the Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Somerset. There was again no business but the reading of the minutes, the Lodge was closed at five o'clock and the Brethren afterwards sat down to a Masonic banquet prepared by Bro. Bastin and spent the evening in peace, order and conviviality. In other words, they celebrated the start of 106 and we continue to celebrate this event at the appropriate time.

CHANGES

What of the other occasions? We can imagine the jubilant gathering of exiled Irishmen working in the Newton Abbot clayfields, when Sun Lodge, then No. 240 was consecrated at the Sun Inn, Newton Abbot, on St Patrick's Day, 1759. It continued to pay contributions to Grand Lodge up to 1781 but it had a chequered history of which we do not know a great deal, except that the Master had gone back to Ireland and that a second-hand dealer had got hold of the original Warrant and was trying to sell it. Attempts to rescue the Warrant failed and that is why Sun Lodge works under a Warrant of Confirmation.

By the alteration of numbers in the year 1770, Sun Lodge became 196. The numbers were closed up again in 1780, when Sun became 160. There was move in the other direction in the following year and Sun became 161 and also faded from the records of Provincial Grand Lodge. In spite of this it was given the number 141 in the year 1792, so it was evidently not regarded as completely redundant, although the Provincial Grand Secretary reported, "Remaining members abroad and Master in Ireland".

Eventually, after a great deal of negotiation, the Brethren at Exmouth, who had for some time been working under an unnumbered Warrant, were granted the Warrant of Sun Lodge No. 141 of Newton Abbot but the Warrant as was not unusual in the 18th Century had been lost.

EXMOUTH WORKING

SO Sun Lodge came to Exmouth, The Warrant of Confirmation gives the date of removal as 1784 but the Lodge did not get a Centenary Warrant until 1904, the date being apparently based on that of the actual Warrant of Removal. The Warrant of Confirmation was granted in 1822 and W. Bro. Ivor Grantham, a Grand Lodge historian expressed a hope that when the time came for the Lodge to petition for a bi-centenary Warrant, special

consideration would be given to the Lodge's claim to uninterrupted existence in Exmouth since an earlier date than 1804. This duly came to be and Sun Lodge celebrated its bi-centenary on April 8, 1997, with Grand Lodge confirming continuous working in Exmouth from 1797.

Sun Lodge first met at Exmouth at the Dolphin Inn, The Cross, Which was destroyed by enemy action in January 1941, It removed to the Globe Hotel, The Strand, in 1808, went back to the Dolphin Inn in 1817 and remained there until 1842, when it again reverted to the Globe Hotel, There it remained until the Globe Hotel was demolished in 1866, when it took up its quarters in the Ballroom of the Royal Beacon Hotel. After another 28 years it obtained its present home in the Masonic Hall, St, Andrews Road, Exmouth and we must be grateful to the Brethren of those days for the sacrifices which made this possible.

Sun Lodge became No. 171 in 1814 as a result of the Act of Union and 123 in 1832 when the Lodges were again closed up.

You will see that Sun Lodge has probably more occasions to celebrate than any other Lodge in existence. Incidentally, this is not the only thing about the Lodge that was unique, for the Lodge was the only Sun in the Masonic firmament from 1759 to 1945, when Sun Lodge No. 6040 was consecrated at the Clarendon Restaurant, Hammersmith Broadway.

SHIPPING DAYS

Conditions in the Lodge were a little different in the 19th Century. The officers included a Registrar, a master of ceremonies and a sword bearer. The membership reflected the change in local conditions. The Suez Canal had not been opened and the Wooden Walls were still carrying the hearts of Oak of Britain to all parts of the world. There was flourishing ship trade to South America and the West Coast of Africa. So of the seventy members of Sun Lodge more than twenty were master mariners and several were ship owners and shipbuilders. Among the latter were three Past Masters of the Lodge, Thomas and Richard Redway and James Wishart. The Redways also played a great part in developing the Exeter Road and Rill Grove end of town.

Mention of the master mariners of course, recalls the old tale of the brief sojourn of Perseverance Lodge, No. 164, Sidmouth in Exmouth. Perseverance Lodge was an Atholl or Ancient Lodge and Sun Lodge was one of the Moderns. Perseverance Lodge was constituted at East

Stonehouse, in 1813 but in 1824 came to the York Hotel, Exmouth. The feeling between the two streams of Freemasonry was not always cordial but the Brethren of Perseverance were apparently not unwelcome in Exmouth, for W. Bro. Southcott of Sun Lodge was installed as the first Exmouth Master of Perseverance Lodge. The York Hotel closed down four years later and it appears that Perseverance Lodge met for a time a the Globe Hotel, The Strand, Exmouth (on the site of what was the old Clapp's Café). The story goes that the Brethren of Perseverance Lodge used to attract the customers by spending the initiation fee on a leg of Mutton and caper sauce for the subsequent banquet. The Brethren of Sun Lodge, it is said decided that something had to be done to meet the situation and so they decided that out of the initiation fee should come the price of a couple of grogs for each brother present on nights of initiation. Seeing there were so many master mariners among Master Masons of Sun Lodge it is perhaps not surprising that Sun Lodge had adopted the winning spirit. I can only say that the tale was implicitly believed when W. Bro. W.G.N. Gorfin was a small boy and it was told to him with great relish by an uncle, who was both a Master Mason and a master mariner and he gave it as the reason why Perseverance Lodge moved on to Sidmouth in 1833.

INCONVENIENCE!

The practice appeared in 1878 to have been getting a little out of hand. The Master was then W. Bro. W.G. Lacey. He was not a popular figure. An owner of small house property and a factor in the local Honiton lace trade, he was known as "Sue Lace-Sticks" and had a reputation for being strait-laced. He had given notice of a motion to remove the Lodge from the Royal Beacon Hotel to a private house as soon as this could be made convenient but he declined to move it because the record on the Lodge summons was not in accordance with the words spoken by him. Bro. Secretary Carter had recorded that the removal be effected "as soon as the necessary convenience be made". At all events, on September 9, 1878, the Worshipful Master proposed and W. Bro. Webb Elphinstone-Stone seconded, "That sixpence only be allowed from the funds of this Lodge for refreshments for each member at the Lodge meeting", After a full discussion this was lost by a large majority. Sixpence of course, would have paid for three grogs. Maybe the proposer and seconder may have had something to do with the failure of this attempted reform. Bro. Elphinstone-Stone was variously known as Elephant Stone or Tiger Stone. As commanding officer of the warship Tiger he had got into a bit of a mess off the Crimean coast.

Whether or not the tale is true, there is no doubt that the custom of free grogs in Sun Lodge went on up to the start of the 20th Century. W. Bro W.G.N. Gorfin remembers a new treasurer, W. Bro. W.L. Cocks called upon his employer, the W. Bro Thomas Freeman, who was blind and who had been Master of Sun in 1867 and told the old man he had received an account for the initiation grogs. "Oh yes" said Bro. Freeman, "we always pay for that". "Not any more we don't!" was the determined reply and so another old customer went by the board. Incidentally, the Brethren of Sun Lodge in 1863 were made honorary members of Perseverance, so the breach was healed.

In those days there were a good many more petitions for poor and distressed Brethren than we get in the Lodge nowadays and the response would not be regarded as generous in these more affluent times.

In May 1871, there was a reminder of the days when Sun Lodge met at Starcross because a letter was received from Bro. Pyecroft, Past Master of the Starcross Lodge, calling attention to the distressed condition of the widow of Thomas Dixon of Kenton, a member of Sun Lodge and the sum of 2 gns. was sent.

TRAGIC YEAR

The year 1871 was perhaps the most tragic in the history of Sun Lodge, In January, Bro. William Thomas Maynard, the local jeweller had installed the stationmaster, Bro. Walter Richard Shrimpton. The way had been cleared by a Lodge of Emergency called the previous week at the request of two Past Masters for the purpose of initiating Mr. John Searle and passing Bro. Horatio Reeves, thereby relieving the regular Lodge from any work beyond the Installation of the Master Elect. It was a fairly busy year. Only a week later there was another Lodge of Emergency at the Royal Beacon Hotel, Exmouth, "for the purpose of conferring the Master Mason degree upon Bro. A. Matthews, who was desirous of taking the degree before going to sea and for the initiation of Mr. Thomas Bell of Whitehaven, master mariner, both expecting to leave Exmouth in the course of a few days.

Another Lodge of Emergency was held on Saturday, May 6, to initiate Mr. Jesse Collings, a distinguished native of Exmouth, who subsequently became an M.P. and a close friend of Joseph Chamberlain, the great Colonial Secretary who initiated the policy of Tariff Reform and who himself established the smallholdings policy which was popularly known

as "Three Acres and a Cow". He and Joe Chamberlain were elected for Birmingham constituencies as Radicals but crossed the floor of the House on the issue of Home Rule for Ireland and became as Liberal-Unionists, part of the Conservative Party.

The Lodge also gave £3 to a member, an Exeter tradesman, to help with his trade losses. Four meetings were held in May and one of the emergencies was that Bros. Turner and Lendon were in Exmouth and desirous of taking the Fellowcraft degree before again leaving the town.

The were twelve Lodge meetings up to the regular stated Lodge of August 14, when Bro. Benjamin Butter Bastin, the licensee of the Royal Beacon Hotel (who held the office of Secretary pro tem with his son of the same name as Registrar), tendered his resignation as Secretary and the office was taken on for the remainder of the year by Bro. Alfred Augustus Carter. It is a little curious that the minutes for the whole of this year, with the exception of the Installation meeting, were marked "confirmed" but the Master's signature had vanished, apparently owing to the poor quality of the Lodge ink!

THE MASTER SHOT

At all events, tragedy descended upon the Lodge in the early morning, two days later on Wednesday, August 16. The Worshipful Master W. Bro. W.R. Shrimpton and his I.P.M., W. Bro. W.T. Maynard with other Brethren, had had a late night and paid a final call to Bro. Maynard's shop, where the window had been cleared before being re-dressed and jewellery was lying about on the counter. "Aren't you scared at having all this stuff lying about?" queried the Worshipful Master. "Not on your life", was Bro. Maynard's reply. "I've got a friend here", he went on and produced from a drawer a revolver and pulled the trigger. To his horror there was a report and the Worshipful Master fell dead.

The Brethren had their thirteenth meeting as a Lodge of Emergency on the following Saturday, when Bro. Nicholas Bickford took the Chair and feelingly addressed the Brethren on the instability of life and all human pursuits. In alluding to the deceased worthy brother he remarked that by his Masonic knowledge, brotherly love and unremitting kindness and affability, he had gained to himself sincere and true respect and that his loss would be severely felt by this Lodge, in which he had been at all times a distinguished and useful member. The Lodge was adjourned. The Brethren joined hands and attended in procession in black clothing with

white gloves to the residence of the deceased and from thence to the parish church of St John in the Wilderness in Withycombe Raleigh and all the mortal remains of our deceased brother were deposited in the grave in the south part of the yard. The Brethren returned to the Lodge and decided to send a letter of condolence to the widow. Bro. T. Redway suggested that as it was known to some of the Brethren that the pecuniary means of Mrs. Shrimpton were very limited, that the letter of condolences should be accompanied with the best purse we could possibly get for her and it was carried unanimously. There was a happy sequel for L. and S.W. Railway Co. appointed Mrs. Shrimpton's bachelor brother, Mr. George William Legge, to succeed her husband as stationmaster. She kept house for him and he subsequently became Master of Sun Lodge.

There was no Lodge on Easter Monday of that year but W. Bro. Shrimpton had called a Lodge of Emergency on the following day. As a kind of anti-climax the sad story of the death of Bro. Shrimpton was immediately followed by a note for Monday, September 11, "The Exmouth annual regatta being held today, sufficient Brethren did not attend to make a Lodge and it was arranged that a Lodge of Emergency should be held on Thursday, September 14, 1871.

The pace of Lodge life evidently slowed up for the year ended with a total of only seventeen meetings in what was certainly not an uneventful year. It is worthy of note that Bro. Shrimpton was initiated at a Lodge of Emergency on Monday, January 14, 1867, two days before the Installation meeting and he was installed only four years later.

I would suggest that the moral of this story, is that although as Master of the Lodge you place a great deal of trust in the Immediate Past Master to support you during the ceremonies, don't place too much trust in him and certainly ensure that he is divested of all metallic substances in your presence!

TYLERS FEES

The minutes of the Lodges were sometimes curiously kept. More often than not, the ages of candidates were left blank as were the numbers of Lodges to which joining members belonged. At times the business was set out in some detail and at other times the record was almost laconic, The time of opening was never given but Lodges closed at various times between 7.30p.m. and 10p.m., after which at times the Brethren spent

the rest of the evening in harmony, conviviality and brotherly love. After the Installation banquet the Brethren usually presented their humble thanks to Lady Rolle for her gift of game and venison, a custom that was carried on until the time of the late Lord Clinton, when the Lodge took the view that such gifts should not be accepted.

There is a hint of the Lodge opening times in connection with the appointment of Bro. Francis Horn as Tyler. Bro. John Bowey had told the Master and brethren that in consequence of an alteration in the rules of the R.M.B.I., his pension had been increased to £26 a year and in view of increasing infirmity, he begged to be excused the duties of Tyler. As the oldest member and a Past Master, he was elected an honorary member and Bro. Francis Horn was appointed Tyler. One might add "in due and ancient form", for the motion of Bro. Shrimpton, seconded by Bro. Carter, the following resolution was carried unanimously, "That in consideration of Bro. Horn giving proper attention to his duties as Tyler of the Lodge, he be paid from the funds of this Lodge, four shillings for every Lodge called at 5 O'clock, three shillings for every Lodge called at 6 O'clock and two shillings and sixpence for every Lodge called at a later hour and that he be returned by the Lodge to the Grand and Provincial Lodge as a regular subscribing member".

EARLY CLOSING

A familiar note will be sounded to many present day members by a note on June 8, 1868 which stated, "The committee appointed at the last Lodge to report on the desirability of purchasing a new harmonium stated that they arrived at the conclusion that for the better carrying out of the musical portion of the Ceremonies, it was requisite that a new instrument should be purchased. They also reported that they inspected an instrument at Bro. Henry Bishop Starke's (he lived in Bicton Street and was organist of Holy Trinity Church), which they recommended should be purchased at a cost of fifteen pounds and the old harmonium. This report the Brethren present confirmed.

Quite clearly there was not a great deal of money available to spend on music or anything else. Bro. Nicholas Bickford as Installing Master in January 1865, told the Lodge that his first duty as Treasurer was to congratulate them on the prosperity of the Lodge during the past year. The accounts showed that on December 31, there was a credit balance of £16 11s 1d. The Brethren were happy enough about the financial situation for they afterwards sat down to a Masonic banquet prepared by

Bro. Bastin, with the help of Lady Rolle's venison and game and as usual spent the evening in harmony and brotherly love. They had plenty of time to deal with the seven courses, for the Lodge had closed at 3 p.m.

BUSY LODGE

The Lodge had carried on at the Globe Hotel, The Strand, Exmouth, until July 9, 1866 when it moved to the Royal Beacon Hotel, Exmouth and held its first meeting there on August 13. The proceedings were a kind of general post. Bro. John Spettigue, the Worshipful Master, vacated the Chair which was taken by Bro. B.B. Bastin, P.M., when Benjamin Butter Bastin of Tidwell Barton, East Budleigh, yeoman aged years, was in due and ancient form introduced to the Lodge and initiated into the mysteries of Freemasonry. Bro. B.B. Bastin vacated the Chair and it was taken by Bro. W.T. Maynard, P.M. when Mr. Francis Thomas Cooke, of Withycombe, gentleman, aged 31 years, was in due form introduced to the Lodge and initiated into the mysteries of Freemasonry. Bro W.T. Maynard, P.M., vacated the Chair and it was taken by Bro. Nicholas Bickford, P.M., when Mr. Samuel Harding, of East Budleigh, yeoman aged years was introduced into the Lodge and initiated in the first degree of Freemasonry. Bro. Nicholas Bickford, P.M., vacated the Chair and it was taken by Bro. W.T. Maynard, when Mr. Thomas Hubbard of Exmouth, mariner, was introduced into the Lodge and in due form initiated into the mysteries of Freemasonry.

The Lodge was held at the Royal Beacon Hotel, Exmouth, where Bro. Benjamin Butter Bastin was the licensee but at the close of the minutes there was a cheerful addendum, "It being the last time the Brethren would partake of refreshment at the Globe Hotel, Bro. Bastin, P.M., at the close of the Lodge invited the whole of the Brethren to sit down with him at a Masonic banquet which he had prepared, when the evening was spent in harmony and brotherly love". This time the Lodge had been closed at 6 p.m. It was said that people worked harder in those days but they seemed to have a lot more time for leisurely pursuits.

It was not the custom in those days and indeed it did not become the custom until the 1920's, for the Master of Sun Lodge or Rolle Lodge regularly to install his successor, though occasionally one or two determined spirits had broken the barrier. Usually the Installation was performed in the 1860's and 70's by Bros. W.T. Maynard or Nicholas Bickford.

THANKSGIVING DAY

Lodges of Emergency, however were at times almost everyday affairs. The Brethren held one on Monday, February 26, 1872 to decide that on the following day they would go to Holy Trinity Church in procession for Thanksgiving Day service for the restoration to health of Bro. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales and that they would wear their regalia if the Provincial Grand Master would permit them. The Rev. J. Huyshe duly sent his permission by telegram and on the Tuesday "a procession was duly formed by the Master of Ceremonies, the Brethren fully clothed taking precedence according to their rank in the Lodge, the route being from the Royal Beacon Hotel to the Parade, where they joined the procession already formed and marched from thence by the Strand over the Beacon, through Louisa, Trefusis and Adelaide Terraces to the Chapel of Holy Trinity. The service being impressively delivered by the Vicar (the Rev. T.J. Rocke, M.A.), assisted by the Rev. W. Webb, his curate. At the conclusion of the service the procession reformed in Bicton Place, taking the route of Bicton Street, Montpelier Road and Albion Street to the Parade, where it broke up, the Brethren returning to the Lodge. The Lodge was closed in peace, order and harmony at half past 1 O'clock.

W. Bro. W.G.N. Gorfin noted, "I can visualise that procession, for as a small boy playing on the Chapel Hill, I happened to look towards the back of the Beacon and saw emerging a truly wonderful site, a vision of pale blue and purple and gold, of swords, staves, top hats and bowlers, all bearing down on to ST. Andrews Road. It was my first introduction to Freemasonry, this sight of the Brethren of Sun Lodge and their visitors preparing, on a fine autumn day of 1894, to open their new home. They had come from the Royal Beacon Hotel and on to Holy Trinity Church and finally landed here, where in humble gratitude we now celebrate another Centenary.

THE PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

Sun Lodge has had many distinguished and honourable members over the last two hundred and fifty years but perhaps our most eminent member was the Right Worshipful Brother Kenneth J. Alford Provincial Grand Master of Devonshire, who was an initiate of the Sun Lodge and was also Master of the Lodge in 1970.

Right Worshipful Brother Alford was a leading figure in the Lodge and the Province and was both admired and revered by the Brethren of Sun Lodge for the continued support that he provided to the Lodge. Indeed the original committee room was renamed the Ken Alford room and dedicated in his honour.

It is with the deepest regret, we record that our most revered friend and brother, Kenneth J. Alford, Provincial Grand Master, died on Tuesday May 17, 1994 after a short illness and with much pain bravely born.

ROYAL MASONIC TRUST FOR GIRLS AND BOYS – 2012 FESTIVAL

Recently the Sun Lodge has been assisting with the Devonshire 2012 Festival appeal to raise funds for the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys, which is being run over a five year period.

The Sun Lodge Charity Steward, Bro. David M. Bassett has carried out his duties in an exemplary manner, so far extracting the necessary monies from the Brethren of Sun Lodge, to enable the Lodge to gain Grand Patron status. This has not been an easy task, when you take into account the current global financial crisis, which we all find ourselves in.

Nevertheless, Bro. Bassett's efforts have to date, raised over £20,000, which Sun Lodge has pledged to the appeal and he has been congratulated for his commitment to his office.

From left to right

Bro. David Bassett (Charity Steward), W. Bro. Mike Cane (Festival Rep), R. W. Bro. Michael T Penny (Provincial Grand Master, Devonshire), R.M.T.G.B Chief Executive, W. Bro. Brett Varker (W.M.), W. Bro. David Greenaway (Sec) and W. Bro. John LeBalleur (Tres)

THE IRISH IN US

There is one suggestion which has been raised with regards to the mystery of the earliest days of Sun Lodge. Why should it have faded out so completely from Newton Abbot? Its roots could not have been very deep in the soil of Mid Devon or somebody would have wanted to hold onto it.

Why should the Master have gone to Ireland at a time when Ireland, so full of troubles, was not a desirable goal for English people and the flow was very much in the opposite direction, with Irishmen fleeing to England as a haven from famine, battle, murder and sudden death?

Well Brethren, does date of our original Warrant, March 17, 1759, convey anything to you? A chance remark brought the thing to my mind. St. Patrick's Day!

Was Sun Lodge formed by a little colony of refugee Irishmen who had found a home and employment in Newton Abbot?

In those days, Brethren apparently had a little more say than they have nowadays in the matter of the date of their Warrant of Constitution and it may well have been that a request for the date to be that of their Patron Saint would have been successful.

They took the name of the Sun Inn for their Lodge because in those days Brethren depended a good deal upon the patronage of their host, They paid a few coppers "for the good of the house", which provided them with their accommodation and often, quite wrongly pledged their Warrant and regalia to the landlord of the premises they occupied.

It could be well have been that this little group gradually died out or lost their interest not only in the locality but also in the Lodge they had formed and which had served their purpose for the time being.

This can only be a suggestion of which there can be no proof, although one might still perhaps find at Newton Abbot some evidence bearing on the matter.

If it were true, one can only say that in the mercy and goodness of the Great Architect of the Universe these Irish refugees built far better than they knew.

They have provided for us a wonderful heritage, probably more potent for good than ever before in its history. They have given us much to be thankful for in the past, much to carry forward into the future. It is for the Brethren of today to make the best use of the talents, which have been bestowed upon them by the Supreme Grand Master, to see that the harvest of 250 years is gathered for the Glory of the Great Architect and the good of His Creation.

For in spite of the Welfare State, the United Nations and all the other devices of modern civilisation, the need of the Most Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons is as great as ever it was. It has a part to play in the world which can be discharged by no other human organisation and in that work may Sun Lodge go forward to do its share, stronger and wiser than ever before in the knowledge of the 250 years, spread over the 18th to the 21st Centuries, that lie behind it.

Whilst preparing this revised version of the history of Sun Lodge, No. 106, I have had the very pleasurable honour of being able to review the ancient records of the Lodge, which have been handed down through the centuries by many worthy and notable brothers who held the offices of Secretary, Treasurer and of course Master of the Lodge. Through their conscientiousness and commitment to preserve the Order, we are able to enjoy the benefit of the information they worked so hard to protect. Whilst researching through the old tomes and collections of documents, ably assisted by W. Bro. Tony F. Jeffrey, D.C., I felt very humbled to be in the presence of these ancient writings, with their exquisitely written script, in the knowledge that I was handling documents prepared by the most eminent members of Sun Lodge and that I was honoured to be able to obtain a glimpse into their lives and the important issues of their day.

It is very difficult for me to express in words the great sense of honour I feel, when I see my name appended to the same list of my forebears on the Roll of Past Masters of the Sun Lodge, No. 106. I hope that in time to come, my successors will experience the same feelings.

W. Bro. Raymond Brett Varker, Worshipful Master.

My appreciation goes to the following Brethren, who have assisted with the preparations for celebrating 250 years of Sun Lodge.

W. Bro. David Greenaway PPrJGW
W. Bro. Michael K. Roscoe PPrJGD
W. Bro. Tony Jeffery
W. Bro. Graham W. Rowland
W. Bro. Paul Bowden
Bro. Michael B. England
Bro. Viv J. Woodall

PAST MASTERS OF SUN LODGE, No. 106
1850 – 2009

1850 – James Wishart
1851 – Thomas J. Brooking
1852 – William Opie
1853 – Samuel Hodder
1854 – George William Turner
1855 – Thomas Martin Wills
1856 – Charles Bricknell
1857 – George Peter Perring Thomas
1858 – Henry Cranstoun Adams
1859 – Nicholas Bickford
1860 – Thomas Redway
1861 – Pearce M. Hadley
1862 – Richard Redway
1863 – William T. Maynard
1864 – William Haymes
1865 – William Thomas
1866 – John Spettigue
1867 – Thomas Freeman
1868 – Richard B Thompson
1869 – George J. Bishop
1870 – Alfred Augustus Carter
1871 – Walter R Shrimpton
1872 – William T, Blake
1873 – George Peters Allen
1874 – Procter Sherwin
1875 – Thomas Higgs
1876 – George W. Legge
1877 – George C. Maynard
1878 – Walter George Lacey
1879 – William Creasy
1880 – Samuel George Blackmore
1881 – Edward Bishop
1882 – William L. Cocks
1883 – George R. Stevens
1884 – John R. Cheal
1885 – Joseph Wills
1886 – Joseph Wills
1887 – William H.G. Churchill
1888 – Jabez Bennetts
1889 – Francis T. Horn
1890 – Henry F. Pratt
1891 – William Henry Perry
1892 – J.H. Higgs
1893 – Harry Perry
1894 – Henry Mann
1895 – Frederick Hayne
1896 – George Stokes
1897 – Herbert Bridle
1898 – James Thomas Foster
1899 – Frederick Margrie
1900 – Henry William Crews
1901 – Albert Cleak
1902 – Harry Evans
1903 – Francis William Clapp
1904 – William Henry Wright
1905 – Edwin Webber
1906 – Samuel J. Blackmore
1907 – Alfred Tootell
1908 – Henry Peters
1909 – Frederick G. Davey
1910 – Thomas G. Sedgemore
1911 – Alexander Kneel
1912 – Alexander Kneel
1913 – Frank Grace
1914 – William Runnalls
1915 – Sidney Burrow
1916 – Francis C. Horn
1917 – William J. Horne
1918 – Charles H. Cole
1919 – William Staddon
1920 – Samuel G. Case
1921 – Albert E. Banfield
1922 – Robert Teele
1923 – Edward Robert Follet Coleberd
1924 – Bertram F. Webber
1925 – Arthur George Wills
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